

THE VIEWS OF SELECTED AMERICAN HISTORIANS ON ISSUES  
BEARING UPON THE TEACHING OF HISTORY

Dissertation

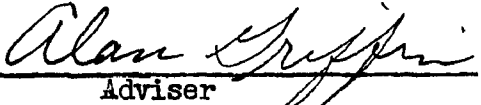
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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

One of the most effective devices in modern propaganda is the practice of making assertions which purport to represent the views of a whole group, that is, of the entire membership of an organization, a profession, a racial or interest group, or even a nation, but which, in fact, carry only the opinions of the person speaking. In an era which is characterized by organizations that classify very large numbers of people under a single label, this technique has become a particularly powerful means of affecting opinions and attitudes. The effectiveness of the device may be explained by the fact that most of those being "spoken for" do not often have occasion to "compare notes" or to confront the self-styled "spokesman". The writer or speaker, then, who, although stating no one's position but his own, acts as if he represents the unanimous judgment of a group, may never be called to account by those he presumes to speak for. Furthermore, if he is not held accountable by the group for whom he claims to speak, he is not likely to be challenged by the members of his general audience, many of whom may not be in the least organized in relation to the area of life to which his words relate. He, therefore, often is left free to propagandize with little fear of exposure.

The problem posed by the practice of making one's words count for more than they do has come to affect a number of aspects of American life. Spokesmen for special interest organizations and professions of all kinds represent their words as those of the entire membership of their groups. When, in fact, they are speaking only for themselves or for segments of their organizations. Clem Whitaker, director of the American Medical Association's campaign against the Truman-sponsored national health insurance bill a few years ago, for instance, made the following statement: "This isn't going to be any pantywaist complaint. . . . The cirtics of the medical profession have had their field day--and they'll continue to have it until American medicine strikes back and strikes hard . . . . We're going to attack--and attack--and attack."<sup>1</sup> Mr. Whitaker's statement in the name of American medicine seems to discount the thousands of doctors who have chosen to stay out of the American Medical Association, the numerous Negro doctors of the South who are not members because of the organization's membership policies, and the many doctors within the American Medical Association who openly supported the Truman health plan.

Another organization, the American Legion, has a lobbyist in Washington who promotes views as if the millions of Legion members endorsed them. Yet, the indirect election system and the process by which a few top officials determine the issues around which lobbying

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1. Howard Whitman, "Doctors in an Uproar", Collier's, 123 (May 14, 1949), p. 21.



activities center mean that the vast majority of Legionnaires are not asked to express a view about the various proposals officially sponsored by the Legion.<sup>2</sup>

In education, the field of the writer's professional interest, the "spokesman technique" has been used as freely as in other groups. References to "what the modern school is trying to do" or to "the purposes of education today" are often substituted for what a particular writer wants schools to do or to attempt.

The practice of speaking for a whole group as if there were agreement within the group has manifested itself, also, at a number of points in the series of attacks which have been made on the schools in recent years. In Scarsdale, New York, for example, a minister who was one of the leaders of a group that wanted to censor the books used in the community's school system reacted to the school board's decision to keep Howard Fast's Citizen Tom Paine on the shelves by claiming that "the board had gone on record in direct contradiction to the teachings of the church." Reverend Edward C. Boynton, popular minister of the Congregationalist Church in the city, responded to this charge, saying, "It is not clear from Mr. Karnan's use of the words 'the Church' exactly for whom he speaks authoritatively. To avoid any misunderstanding, because of my profession as a minister, I state simply, Mr. Kernan does not speak for me."<sup>3</sup>

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2. Amy Porter, "The Legion Eats 'Em Alive," Collier's, Volume 118 (October 5, 1946) pp. 52-53.

3. C. Winfield Scott and Clyde M. Hill, Public Education Under Criticism, New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1954, p. 332.

The field secretary of the National Education Association's Defense Commission reports that the Conference of American Small Business Organizations is one of ten agencies whose good intentions are doubted. This latter organization, which purports to speak for those engaged in small business, campaigns for permission to evaluate textbooks and supplementary material used in public schools. In 1950, the House of Representatives' select committee on lobbying made a report on its special study of this organization. In the final paragraphs of the report, the Congressional group repudiates the organization's claim as the spokesman of small business: "As for CASBO's claim that it voices the 'deliberated opinion' of small business, its methods of ascertaining and formulating such opinion, sometimes through loaded questionnaires, prepared resolutions, and otherwise should make the Congress wary of any figures which CASBO offers on a measure of small business opinion."<sup>4</sup>

This thesis is concerned with an important aspect of the problem of attacks on the schools, and especially spokesmen's claims of total agreement within the groups they say they represent. It does not deal with the attacks in general, but focuses on a particular set of criticisms of school practices and of professional educators made by scholars in the liberal arts and sciences.

Those scholars who have been outspokenly critical of the schools have tended to make the general charge that the educationist-dominated

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4. Ibid., pp. 240-42.

public schools of the United States are being permeated by an anti-intellectual spirit. This attitude, they claim, results in substitution of "life adjustment" for intellectual development as the major goal of the schools. In teachers' training, it leads to replacement of work in the subjects to be taught by "professional education courses". In addition it fosters organization around "current life problems" or "areas of interest" the content from which the school curriculum is made instead of retaining as school subjects the systematically organized fields of knowledge, such as English, science, mathematics and history.<sup>5</sup>

Some of the critics make no claim that they are speaking for anyone but themselves. They simply are dissatisfied with the way the schools are operating. Bernard Iddings Bell, for example, points out that there is neglect of intellectual training in the schools in favor of education for adjustment, and he indicates disapproval of the state of affairs that he describes as follows:

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5. For purposes of clarity and convenience, the term scholar will be used as it is by the liberal arts and science scholars to denote only that segment of the scholarly world which specializes in the arts and sciences. This in no way signifies acceptance of the apparent assumption of this group that its members have exclusive title to the term. Rather, the writer is convinced that there are thorough, painstaking men of knowledge specializing in say, philosophy of education as well as there are learned botanists who merit this name.

Also in the interest of clarity, the term educationist, which is used by a number of the scholar-critics, will usually be employed to refer to those who have responsibility for pedagogical instruction in the training of teachers. The opprobrium often attached to the term by these critics is not accepted, however.

In former days I told myself, it was assumed by everybody that the primary business of schools is the training of minds to function effectively. It was assumed that people with trained minds can be entrusted to acquire information and practical techniques on their own hook. These ladies and gentlemen [members of a well known association of secondary schools] apparently believed nothing of the sort. They were all for broadening, what they called "orientating," evidently on the assumption that this was not only the school's first business but almost its only business; they took it as a matter of course that their young charges would mature automatically. But, as I well know and as Dr. Woodbridge and people like him have insisted, this is not apt to take place. I suspected that what was wrong was a misconception on the part of the educators about what boys and girls of teen age are actually like and what they must somehow or other grow into if they are to matter in an adult world.<sup>6</sup>

Albert Lynd, former history instructor at Harvard and Stanford, addressing himself to the problem of teacher training, raises his voice in strong opposition to the dominance of "pedagogues" in determining the direction of teacher preparation. He says,

By patient lobbying over many years, the superpedagogues have so influenced state and local laws that their training courses in teaching theory and method are virtually essential to the eligibility of any candidate for a job in your schools. In most states this is accomplished by "certification" laws. These have been obtained from upcountry legislators who are awed by professorial millinery. Eager to show a proper zeal for Our Schools, they have been easily persuaded that an educated teacher is necessarily one who has had a certain amount of head rubbing by a professor of education.<sup>7</sup>

The practice of substituting "current problems" courses or a curriculum based on students' "needs" or society's "demands" for English,

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6. Bernard Iddings Bell, Crisis in Education. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1949.

7. C. Winfield Scott and Clyde M. Hill, Public Education Under Criticism, p. 169.

mathematics, science, history, and language courses is reported and deplored by English professor Elizabeth Jackson:

Parents say they send their children to school to learn English and arithmetic, and they come home with the best way to put on lipstick and theories about the right age to date. We have been involved in a series of skirmishes between Education with a capital letter and education, lower case, intelligence, and common sense. And common sense is worsted at every turn.<sup>8</sup>

Whatever the merits of their arguments, the writers cited up to this point do not in any way suggest that they represent anyone else's point of view. They set forth their individual reactions to certain practices which they find distasteful. So much cannot be said for all the writers who make similar criticisms. Foreign language professor Harold Clapp, for example, at times takes the position that he cannot presume to be the spokesman for a unified scholarly world, while on other occasions he talks as if scholars have a unified point of view on school practices. Writing in the American Association of University Professors Bulletin, he says that his earlier criticisms of the educationists' tendency to slight the discipline of the mind and to foster low standards in teacher preparation, according to letters received by him, are widely supported by both laymen and scholars. He also reports similar support for views expressed by other critics. He freely admits, however, that this considerable backing of his and other critics' contentions does not measure definitively the number of scholars in agreement with the position he represents:

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8. Elizabeth Jackson, "Project in Anti-Educational Research," American Association of University Professors Bulletin, Volume 36 (Autumn, 1950) Number 3, p. 511.

I rather expected a flurry of protest against these views [criticizing educationists]; exactly one person wrote me his objections, although, in addition, the Dean of one School of Education did send a protest to my administrative superior. On the other hand, from some thirty different States came scores of letters expressing approval, often introduced in such terms as "My whole department joins me in . . ." or "Many of my colleagues and I . . ." Those teachers, laymen, administrators, and students who went out of their way to write letters represented nearly every field of the liberal and technical curriculum. In most cases they said in effect: "You are right as far as you go, but did you also know that . . .?"--and the things that they added made my earlier contentions about "Education" and its implications seem rather anemic.

Further criticism of "Education" and Educationists has appeared in a variety of books and articles during the past five years. If these have not actually proved the validity of my allegations, they have at least demonstrated that a great many serious men and women hold comparable views . . . . The correspondence stimulated by the critical writings of these other authors has apparently followed about the same pattern as mine, . . . .

While it cannot be claimed that all of this additional testimony constitutes any kind of statistical straw vote, it is insistent, and consistent, enough to represent what must be highly significant straws in the wind. The opinions that make up this evidence are scattered through the academic and lay world. The pattern into which they fall merits public consideration, for it is the pattern of thought brought to bear on teacher training and general education matters by a segment of the profession which, although indeterminate, is clearly not negligible.<sup>9</sup>

On the other hand, in a discussion involving speculations on the possibility that "scholars in the liberal disciplines and professional fields," are on the verge of active participation in decisions made regarding school policy, Clapp leads one to believe he sees unanimity

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9. Harold L. Clapp, "The Stranglehold Revisited," American Association of University Professors Bulletin, Volume 40 (Summer, 1954), No. 2, pp. 291-2.

within the scholarly world when he refers specifically to "the scholar's point of view":

The brutal fact is that a great many scholars in the liberal disciplines and professional fields have little respect for many of their Educationist colleagues or for the opinions and practices identified with them.

This state of affairs is not really new; it appears only to have become intensified and more articulate in recent years. One attractive hypothetical interpretation of this change is that American scholars and scientists, after failing for many years to fulfill their natural responsibilities toward the public schools, are finally emerging from that particular ivory tower. Perhaps at last they are going to reassert their function as public educators, demanding serious reforms in the programs for teachers in training and the restoration of intellectual respectability to public school standards and curricula.

This would mean moving on from the present rather negative stage in the controversy. Such a move, obviously, not only would be desirable; it ought to be made to whatever extent possible in collaboration with, rather than against, the professional educators. One positive step that the scholars might take toward this collaboration would be to indicate clearly what kind of positive programs, actual or theoretical, they would consider satisfactory. This would have the advantage of shifting the burden of proof quite interestingly. The reaction of the professionals to these proposals, their counter-proposals, their willingness or unwillingness to be a party to any proposals that accorded a larger place to the scholar's point of view in the councils of educationdom, might indicate whether we have or have not moved into a positive stage in our relationship. The negotiations implicit in this suggestion would require the services of some sort of formal agency.<sup>10</sup>

Regardless of his contention, then, that the number of scholars having the same view as his and other critics' about public school policies is indeterminate, his reference in another place to "the scholar's point of view" on educational matters, the writer submits,

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10. Ibid., pp. 299-300.

would lead many readers to the conclusion that he is convinced of agreement among those in the arts and sciences.

Unlike Clapp, who leaves some doubt about whether he intends to offer himself as a spokesman for other scholars, there are a number of writers making criticisms similar to his who clearly imply that they express the unanimous judgment of their own segment of the scholarly world.

Among this group is Stewart Scott Cairns, a mathematician. Discussing "anti-intellectualism" in the schools and its threat to the sciences and the humanities he calls upon "scientists and scholars" to take an active interest in the questions revolving around school policy. In the course of his plea, he implies that scholars have a uniform and superior point of view concerning school aims and that they reveal superiority in their "interpretation and implementation" of aims as well:

The present article is restricted primarily to mathematical training and is thus largely confined to one special phase of the battle against anti-intellectualism in the school. The plight of the humanities is in a way even more serious than that of the sciences, for the latter currently have the mixed blessing of an artificial stimulus from defense efforts in favor of adequate scientific training of students. . . . Accordingly, let the scientists not neglect their humanist colleagues in the common struggle for the improvement of the public school program.

Prudence or modesty would lead most of us at first sight to shun these large and controversial questions. . . . Decisions will of necessity be made somehow by someone, concerning the educational program of our schools. We have only ourselves to blame if, by default, we permit vital policies to be determined on the basis of improper criteria in the hands of persons who, however well-meaning, have a biased and only partial comprehension of the issues at stake.



. . . The guiding principles now most prominently advocated constitute a jumble of policies, subsumed under the general title of "life adjustment" education. Backed by powerful forces . . . "life adjustment" is gaining greater and greater prevalence in our country . . .

Authoritative information on this movement is to be found in pamphlets issued by the Office of Education of the Federal Security Agency. One such pamphlet says, "Life adjustment education is designed to equip all American youth to live democratically with satisfaction to themselves and profit to society as home members, workers and citizens." Although, in the form here stated, life adjustment is a great and noble aim for the public schools, grave trouble inevitably arises in its interpretation and implementation. Clearly, for the scholar and for the scientist, living with satisfaction to oneself and with profit to society will carry very different implications from those conveyed to a man devoid of intellectual interests.<sup>11</sup>

Harry Fuller, a scientist, in the article, "The Emperor's Clothes", is another who talks as if scholars have a single point of view concerning problems of school policy which he is well qualified to represent. The article, based on an address given before a Phi Beta Kappa gathering in 1950, carries an admonition to this group to protect that for which Phi Beta Kappa stands, the "pursuit of knowledge" in the arts, sciences and humanities, against the onslaught of educationists:

I believe that a discussion of the debasement of liberal education and of sound scholarship by these dreary intellectual sinks [education colleges] and their often dismal practitioners is particularly appropriate at a meeting of Phi Beta Kappa. You who are members of Phi Beta Kappa have a profound interest in the noble creations of the human mind and in the magnificence of the world we inhabit, as they are expressed in the humanities, the arts, and the sciences, and you must become aware if you are not already that a sustained attack is being made in our public schools on these great fields of

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11. Stewart Scott Cairns, "Mathematics and the Educational Octopus," The Scientific Monthly, Volume 76 (April, 1953), pp. 231-2).

human thought. A crisis is upon us, and all good men and true (and women) of Phi Beta Kappa must rally to the defense of those things for which Phi Beta Kappa stands-- the study of the dignity and uniqueness of man and his creatures, as they are made evident in the pursuit of knowledge of literature, of language, of philosophy, of the arts, of the sciences. . . .<sup>12</sup>

Arthur E. Bestor, historian, is another who writes as if there were a uniform point of view among scholars on matters of school policy. In Educational Wastelands he asks for active participation in the "scientific and scholarly world" in combatting anti-intellectualism in the schools. In the course of his plea, he indicates that there are small disagreements about their own aims and methods between scholars in some of the science and arts fields and those in others but points out that these differences are inconsequential in view of the common goals and values they share in relation to the total educational enterprise. He says,

The people expect intellectual guidance from the scientific and scholarly world in matters pertaining to education at every level. It has not been furnished in the recent past. It must be furnished in the future.

The first step as I see it, must be for the learned world to create an agency entirely its own, through which it can state its views on public school policy independently and unitedly. It must be ready at all times to express a considered judgment concerning the intellectual soundness of the programs that are offered in the elementary and secondary schools. . . . It must speak with a voice unmistakably its own, not allowing its words to be smothered or twisted or censored by others. If scholars will create for themselves an organ through which they can expound their educational principles with clarity and force, I am confident that they will be listened to with respect.

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12. Harry J. Fuller, "The Emperor's New Clothes, or Prius Dementat", Scientific Monthly, Volume 72 (January, 1951), pp. 32-3.

The basis for such unity indubitably exists. Within the learned world there are differences of opinion, of course, but they are minor differences. Mathematicians and anthropologists may approach their problems in quite different ways; biologists and linguists may not completely understand each other's objectives; historians and sociologists may quarrel over questions of methodology. There always will be--there must always be--such differences, for they are the signs of intellectual vigor and of freedom. But scholars and scientists must never lose sight of the over-arching fact that they are partners in a single great enterprise--the greatest that engages the attention of mankind. They share a common purpose: the advancement of understanding and the augmentation of that intellectual power upon which mankind depends for its very existence. They share a common respect for knowledge, for the disciplined mind, for independent, objective, disinterested inquiry. Each of them, whatever his specialized interest, must recognize at all times that these common aims and values are far more significant than any points of difference. Each must remember that it is these common aims and values which anti-intellectualism is seeking to undermine. Should it triumph, no field of science or learning will be exempt from disaster.<sup>13</sup>

The idea which some scholars hold that there is unanimity among them runs counter to the writer's understanding. For example, the writer once listened to a complaint by a college history professor to the effect that beginning college survey courses covered too much material and tended to be filled with ready-made generalizations which students were encouraged to accept without criticism. This historian felt that general courses could more profitably be offered to advanced students who might be expected to bring facts to bear upon the broad generalizations that are a part of such courses. Yet, college catalogues almost invariably feature survey courses for freshmen. And since instructional

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13. Arthur E. Bestor, Educational Wastelands, Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1953, pp. 124-5.

staffs usually have a decisive voice in course offerings, surely some of this craftsman's colleagues must see merit in such offerings.

An article published recently dealt with a rather unsuccessful attempt by one liberal arts college to launch general education courses cutting across departmental lines. This account gave the writer additional reason for wondering about the existence of unanimity among scholars as to what education ought to be. Its author, English professor Marvin T. Herrick, says,

At one university . . . . the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences established an experimental Division of General Studies which operated seven freshmen-sophomore courses that were supposed to cut across departments. Some of these courses actually did cut across departmental boundaries; others were mere compromises with departmental interests. For example, the planners projected a sophomore course which would reunite philosophy and psychology but found, after many tortuous hours of wrangling, that this divorce was now final, and had to be content with one semester of psychology . . . . and one semester of philosophy. The fact that the psychologist in charge of the first half had no use for the philosopher, and that the philosopher had no use for either the psychologist or psychology, hardly contributes to any spirit of unity.<sup>14</sup>

The writer's doubt about the correctness of the implied claim that the scholars are unified in point of view had yet another source. The admission of minor differences by one of the critics led the writer to wonder if whatever agreement there might be were not on that level of high purpose which is so general as to be susceptible of infinite varieties of interpretation and, therefore, meaningless. Was this

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14. Marvin T. Herrick, "The Departmentalization of Knowledge," American Association of University Professors Bulletin, Volume 36 (Autumn, 1950), No. 3, p. 470.

"agreement" of the same order as that shared by all kinds of scholars to the effect that teaching young people to be moral is an important function of the schools, an agreement which allows some to teach that there is a hierarchy of eternal values by which students should live and permits others to teach students that they must learn how to make choices among conflicting values? Even if unanimity on a few general goals should be assumed, the writer wondered, once past these large purposes, such as training students to think and promoting effective citizenship, which are subject to so many conflicting interpretations, would scholars agree on those specific questions concerning curriculum, methodology, and teacher preparation that are raised when school policy is actually made?

That some educationists who have been outspoken participants in the controversy with the scholars also may write as if there were unanimity among their colleagues on such matters as curriculum, methodology, and teacher training is not denied. The present writer's experience as a high school history teacher and as a student in the field of the teaching of history on the secondary level, however, has long since brought acquaintance with practical problems of school policy and the conviction that there is not agreement among educationists on these problems.

The writer does not want to take the position that groups never have a point of view which their membership may accept nor that they never designate spokesmen. Leaders of a labor organization, or a manufacturers' group, for example, may be authorized by its members to

speaking for them on issues of concern to the group. Far from criticizing this practice, the writer is convinced that a highly-organized modern life requires that interest groups have spokesmen. The problem is whether those purporting to speak in the name of others without benefit of any mandate are trying to ascertain and report views or to gain support for their opinions by claiming agreement with those beliefs which, for all they know, may not exist. The former is a legitimate practice in a democracy. The other is at the very heart of authoritarianism. The central question of this thesis is, then: What in respect to this problem is the status of those who profess to speak in the name of scholars? Have they ascertained? Or have they simply stated their own views?

A special interest in history, the teaching of history, and widely-debated issues in the latter field served the writer as a guide in defining the scope and nature of the present inquiry. So did the realization that one investigator could not hope to deal with such a question as it bears on all the liberal arts and sciences. On these bases, the decision was made to test the idea--that liberal arts scholars are in agreement about matters of school policy--within a single field, history. The writer decided to examine the writings of reputable historians on specific issues in the teaching of history for the purpose of determining whether their views are unified. Testing for unanimity, it was thought, might show whether any spokesman or spokesmen could speak for the whole group labeled historians. It was further believed that findings from this investigation, if negative, would cast

substantial doubt on the truth of the broader proposition about the liberal arts in general. If the findings are positive, they would be suggestive of need for further inquiry both in history and in other arts and science fields.

From the outset, the writer has been aware of the possibility at least that some of those in the liberal arts fields may be persuaded that there is not any substantial agreement among their number on matters of school policy. If there are those of such persuasion, however, their doubts have not bulked large in recent public controversies, nor have they seemed to result in widespread inquiries to see whether particular points of view on given issues cut across the arts-education line. Substantial numbers of educationists, therefore, may well be accepting the proposition suggested by the liberal arts parties to the quarrel, namely, that the scholars are in at least near to unanimous agreement on matters of school policy.

Some of these educationists, faced with apparent agreement among scholars which is based on opinions differing from their own, may be somewhat overwhelmed by what seems to be very formidable opposition. Others, who may be in substantial agreement with what they find purported to be the "scholar's point of view", nevertheless may well be stung by implications in the scholars' criticisms that educationists in general are "anti-intellectual". These reactions, it seems to the writer, tend to discourage the educationists from trying to find out what scholars' views actually are and to prevent the former from making an attempt to bring together the considerable abilities of both

groups in joint effort to solve curricular, methodological, and teacher-training problems. It was the writer's opinion, therefore, that evidence of diversity of views among one group of scholars might encourage educationists to enlist the help of scholars in the difficult, controversial, and complex job of building school curricula.

On the other hand, if the idea, fostered by some of the arts critics, to the effect that a single position represents their whole group were re-inforced by evidence resulting from this inquiry, then, educationists would have reason to invite and listen very carefully to the criticisms of such a large, able, and unified group.

Among well-known historians, Arthur E. Bestor, who was quoted earlier, has been the most vigorous of those public critics of the schools whose criticisms leave the impression that scholars, including historians, are in agreement about what school policy should be and that their views are susceptible of accurate interpretation by qualified spokesmen. There is apparently considerable support among historians of what the writer takes to be Bestor's view. Their backing is attested by the fact that the passage of a series of resolutions (offered to the American Historical Association by Bestor in 1952) calling for scholars' concerted attention to public school problems and actually embodying the idea that there is a single point of view among historians and other scholars was urged by sixty-two reputable sponsoring historians and was supported (without being sponsored) by one hundred and thirty-seven others. The sponsoring historians include such eminent men as Carlton J. H. Hayes, Charles H. McIlwain, Samuel Eliot



Morison, James G. Randall, Robert L. Schuyler, and Thomas J.

Wertebaker. Among these sponsors are also the two living historians who are subjects of this study, Arthur M. Schlesinger and Allan Nevins.

The preamble of the resolutions, which expresses concern about anti-intellectualism in the schools, clearly conveys the idea that its signers believe there is a single position concerning educational principles to which historians as a group subscribe:

The American Historical Association stands ready, as it always has done, to co-operate with educational administrators in devising sound public-school programs in history and the social studies. It is alarmed, however, at the growth of anti-intellectualist conceptions of education among important groups of school administrators and educational theorists. Such conceptions have led, in many instances, to public-school curricula in which intellectual training has been pushed into the background, to teacher certification laws and rulings that dangerously underemphasize training in the subjects to be taught, and to pronouncements to the effect that the intellectual criteria employed by scholars and scientists are inapplicable to the public schools. To the degree that such anti-intellectualist conceptions can gain headway in the public school system, the possibility of fruitful co-operation between scholars and professional educators grows smaller.

Because of the serious danger to American intellectual life arising from anti-intellectualist tendencies, the members of this association believe that co-operation with professional educators in devising specific school programs should be supplemented by activity of another kind, designed to uphold and strengthen sound, systematic, disciplined intellectual training in the public schools. Such an effort presupposes a clearcut statement of the educational philosophy to which scholars and scientists subscribe, and seems to call for co-operation among all the learned societies of the country, acting through an independent interdisciplinary commission of their own creation.<sup>15</sup>

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15. Ibid., p. 202.

To determine whether there is such a point of view as implied here and whether it is correctly reported by spokesmen is the central task undertaken by the writer in this thesis.

## CHAPTER II

### THE METHOD OF THE STUDY

Testing the truth of the proposition that historians are in agreement on matters of school practice involved a number of preliminary steps besides the usual ones of devising methods of selecting references and of recording data. The first was that of choosing a group of reputable historians whose writings might be examined relative to their stands on controversial issues in the field of the teaching of history.

The historians selected, it seemed to the writer, needed to be persons who would be widely recognized among their colleagues as eminent craftsmen so that the data gathered about their positions would not be rejected by the generality of historians on the ground that the subjects of the study were not worthy representatives of their group. The writer did not presume to be qualified to make this selection. It was decided, therefore, to ask the help of a jury of professors of history. Three members of the history faculty of the Ohio State University were requested to set down the names of American historians they would not wish to see omitted in a listing representing the group. No attempt was made by the writer to delimit the listing in any way beyond the requirements already noted. The members of the jury were informed simply that the listings were to be used as an aid in the selection of a group of reputable historians whose views on the teaching of history

were to be investigated. The use of the lists, it was made clear to them, would involve no assumption that any one of them claimed his list to be a complete compilation of American historians.

A total of seventy-three historians was named by the three jury members. Of the seventy-three names, thirty-two appeared on at least two lists, and nine appeared on all three lists.<sup>1</sup> The nine were George Bancroft, Henry Adams, Edward Channing, John Bach McMaster, Albert Bushnell Hart, Carl Becker, Charles A. Beard, Arthur Schlesinger, and Allan Nevins.

It was decided to select the historians to be investigated from among the nine who appeared on all three lists. The ground for this choice was the obvious one that craftsmen commanding unanimous jury support could more reasonably be expected to win acceptance as eminent representatives by the craft as a whole than could the men who were named by only two of the jury. The writer realized, of course, that the nine selections appearing on all three jurors' list would not necessarily be duplicated if the whole history profession ran through the same compiling process. Since there was no reason to believe, however, that the jury members' ideas about the qualities required in a reputable historian were unique, it seemed fair to suppose that few of their colleagues would be likely to deny the eminence of the nine.

It was thought that the work of the five historians among the nine whose life spans extended at least into the 1940's would probably

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1. See Appendix A for compilation of the historians whose names appeared on at least two lists.

show evidence of greater concern about widely debated issues in the field of the teaching of history than the writings of those who lived earlier.<sup>2</sup> Preliminary investigation of the writings of the nine proved the writer's hypothesis to be correct. A cursory survey of their work indicated that the five historians living most recently wrote far more which is relevant to the controversial issues in the field of the teaching of history than did the other four. Either very little or no evidence was found of concern about these issues in the writings of Bancroft, Adams, and Channing. The examination of McMaster's works indicated interest on his part in some aspects of problems involved in teaching history, but this concern appeared trifling to the writer beside that evidenced by the five later historians. The five were chosen, therefore, as subjects of the study.

It was felt that this number constituted an adequate sample for purposes of this particular inquiry. Disagreement obviously can be demonstrated in a comparison of the works of only a few men. On the other hand, complete agreement can be shown conclusively only by testing the entire group involved--all the historians. An adequate sample for purposes of proving positively the proposition that historians are in agreement concerning what school policy should be is, therefore, out of the question in a study undertaken by a single investigator. Nevertheless, in an investigation of even a small sample made up of very

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2. The four older historians, together with the dates of their births and deaths are George Bancroft (1800-1891), Henry Adams (1838-1918), Edward Channing (1856-1931), and John Bach McMaster (1852-1932).

eminent men, if complete agreement of point of view were found among them, would be highly suggestive that further study of the proposition under inquiry is warranted.

With the selection of historians completed, there remained the important preliminary task of drafting a series of issues bearing on the teaching of history and around which the proposed study could be organized. The first step in this process involved the selection of areas of controversy from which the issues could be drawn. The writer decided to use the following two requirements in choosing these controversies:

- 1) they should be widely, publicly, and persistently debated,  
and
- 2) they should cover a sufficiently broad range of topics to  
provide an adequate sampling of the views of the five  
historians.

The questions in the field of the teaching of history which are commonly and persistently debated are well known. Selecting those areas of dispute around which this study could be organized, therefore, became a simple twofold process of making a personal judgment concerning their relative importance and of insuring a broad range of topics by including a number of questions falling into each of the major categories of curriculum, methodology, and teacher training.

In considering the importance of areas of dispute, the writer kept in mind the controversies treated in the resolutions introduced before the American Historical Association in 1952 by historian Bestor and

sponsored by a substantial number of his colleagues. Questions which concerned such a large number of eminent professional historians, it seemed to the writer, clearly qualified as important ones. It was decided, therefore, to include among the total number of controversies those dealt with in these resolutions.

Selecting these particular areas of dispute served an additional purpose. It would allow the writer to compare the views of Bestor and his co-signers, who, as was indicated earlier, have seemed to assume the role of spokesmen for their craft, and the positions expressed independently on the same questions by the five historians who are the subjects of the study. This comparison, in turn, when conclusions were drawn, would facilitate whatever judgments might be appropriate concerning the qualifications of the former group as "spokesmen."

The following are the controversies bearing on the teaching of history which the writer found in the resolutions: Whether the organized discipline of history is worthy of time in the school curriculum; whether the study of history is appropriate for all students in the schools who care to elect it, or only for those who will attend college; whether indoctrination is ever defensible; whether gaining knowledge of subject matter or of pedagogy should receive the principal emphasis in teacher training; and whether scholars should assume responsibility for shaping educational policies of the schools.

In addition to the preceding controversies, the writer selected the frequently debated areas of dispute which follow: whether the

history curriculum in the schools should include world or European as well as American history; whether history should be a required subject; whether current controversial issues are more effectively handled through a study of history than through direct examination; whether history is learned best from a detailed study or from a general survey; whether students' introductory acquaintance with history content should be through a systematic study of the subject or through stories, legends, and the like; and whether the study of history has value for its own sake.

Once the several areas of conflict were chosen, the writer formulated a question in each which seemed to catch up important ideas at issue and to allow great variation in points of view. These questions were to serve as the framework around which the five historians' views were to be reported. The order in which the selected issues appear below is a matter of chance and has no significance for the writer:

1. Should American youth study American history only, or should they study American history plus world or European history?
2. Should history be required in the schools rather than merely made available?
3. Should the study of history be strongly urged for all students in the nation's schools or only for those who are expected to become "leaders"?
4. Should history be maintained in the school curriculum as an organized discipline, or should its content merely be employed



in contributing to the understanding of social problems being studied under some other curricular arrangement?

5. Are controversial issues best understood by pursuing a chronological study of history which reveals their past forms clearly and to some extent outlines their present forms; or are they best understood by a direct consideration of the current aspects of the issues with historical background brought in only when it is clearly necessary for understanding?
6. Is history most effectively learned by starting with a detailed study of a limited period or area or by beginning with a general survey of a broad area or time span?
7. Should young students become familiar with the content of history through casual and unorganized experiences before attempting a systematic study of history?
8. Should the history teacher or the writer of history textbooks rigorously confine himself to material he has found to be true, or should he sometimes depart from this principle for the purpose of strengthening the loyalty of people to their country or of unifying them?
9. Should history be studied for its own sake as well as for the purpose of throwing light upon the present scene?
10. Should the preparation of teachers in the field of history consist principally of pedagogical training or of instruction in the subject field to be taught?

11. Should the nature of the history curriculum in the schools be decided by specialists in the field of education, or should such decisions be made primarily by historians?

Once these issues were formulated, to provide a basis for comparison and for judging the qualifications of the sponsors of the resolutions to act as spokesmen for the craft, the writer's next job was to determine the nature of the positions advanced by the sponsoring historians on the issues treated in the resolutions and to report these views briefly. In the following presentation of the views, the writer thinks Bestor's own language makes clear the position taken except on the final two issues. Only those questions, therefore, are elaborated by the writer.

#### The Issue

Should the study of history be strongly urged for all students in the nation's schools or only for those who are expected to become "leaders"?

#### The Position

An educational policy is both anti-intellectual and anti-democratic if it asserts that sound training in the fundamental intellectual disciplines [including history] is appropriate only for the minority of students who are preparing for college and the professions and if it proposes to deprive the rest of the children of our people of such training by substituting programs that minimize intellectual aims.<sup>3</sup>

#### The Issue

Should the history teacher or the writer of history textbooks rigorously confine himself to material he has found to be true or

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3. Arthur E. Bestor, Educational Wastelands, p. 203.

should he sometimes depart from this principle for the purpose of strengthening the loyalty of people to their country or of unifying them?

#### The Position

Freedom implies responsibility, and freedom of teaching implies a responsibility on the teacher's part of knowing the facts and of applying the critical methods of scholarship to the subjects that come up for discussion in the classroom. . . . Especially in history and the social studies where practically all topics are controversial freedom of teaching can be convincingly defended only if teachers are held to rigorous standards of competence in the disciplines involved.

To insist that instruction must meet the exacting standards of scholarship is not to infringe upon freedom of teaching. Such infringements occur when pressure groups--whether reactionary or radical--force the schools to conform to their preconceived ideas, to limit the curriculum, to censor textbooks, or to forbid the teaching of controversial subjects. Scientists and scholars must vigorously resist such efforts to impose upon the schools any narrow dogma in politics, economics, religion, or science for learning itself is thereby threatened with destruction. They must also resist anti-intellectualism in the schools themselves, for if freedom of thinking and respect for intellectual effort are undermined there, it will be easy for demagogues to convince a larger public that intellectual effort is of little value in any case, and that freedom of thought is not worth preserving.<sup>4</sup>

#### The Issue

Should the preparation of teachers in the field of history consist principally of pedagogical training or of instruction in the subject field to be taught?

#### The Position

"It being of course the first requisite of a teacher that he should himself know well that which he is to aid others in learning" (to quote the words spoken at the opening of one of the two original institutions for teacher training established in the United States), all programs for the training and

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4. Ibid., p. 204.

certification of teachers must emphasize competence [presumably including history] in the subject to be taught. Experienced teachers, in particular, ought not to be permitted to achieve professional advancement by piling up additional credits in pedagogical courses when their greatest need is to acquire a more thorough and advanced knowledge of the disciplines they are responsible for teaching.<sup>5</sup>

### The Issue

Should the nature of the history curriculum in the schools be decided by specialists in the field of education, or should such decisions be made primarily by historians?

### The Position

The content of the public school curriculum is of such vital importance to the entire intellectual, scientific, and professional life of the nation that control of secondary-school educational policy ought not to be vested exclusively in a narrow group of secondary-school administrators and professional educators. Scholars [presumably including historians], scientists and other professional men must assume responsibility for advising the public clearly and continuously concerning the scientific and scholarly soundness of proposed changes in the curricula of the public schools. And universities and colleges must preserve and strengthen their entrance requirements in the basic fields of knowledge not merely to maintain their own standards but also to prevent, so far as possible, the deterioration of the secondary-school education which is provided for students not planning to enter college.<sup>6</sup>

Although Bestor has not asserted, and those who signed his document have not endorsed the proposition that historians ought to be the principal makers of history curricula, they have clearly indicated both confidence in the competence of their craft to influence curricular policy and conviction of a necessity for the exercising of such influence.

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5. Ibid., p. 204.

6. Ibid., p. 203.

### The Issue

Should history be maintained in the school curriculum as an organized discipline, or should its content merely be employed in contributing to the understanding of social problems being studied under some other curricular arrangement?

### The Position

An indispensable function of education, at every level, is to provide sound training in the fundamental ways of thinking represented by history, science, mathematics, literature, language, art, and the other disciplines evolved in the course of mankind's long quest for usable knowledge, cultural understanding, and intellectual power . . . .

The great intellectual disciplines are not mere collections of facts and formulas, but ways of thinking with organized structures of their own. . . . Reorganizations of the curriculum are destructive if they cause the student to lose sight of the ordered relationships that exist, and of the methods of investigation that are employed, within each of the basic fields of knowledge. In particular, no genuine knowledge of history is imparted by an omnibus course that uses isolated historical facts merely as illustrations, that presents no conception of historical development, or that treats history itself as irrelevant to an understanding of contemporary society. . . .

. . . . . Be it resolved, that the American Historical Association calls upon its sister learned societies in every field to join with it in creating a Permanent Scientific and Scholarly Commission on Secondary Education, to be made up exclusively of scholars and scientists in the various disciplines of learning. . . . [One of its functions would be] . . . . to co-operate with public educational administrators in devising sound programs for the public schools in the basic intellectual disciplines, on the understanding that the programs mutually agreed upon will actually be made the basis of curricular reorganizations in the schools.<sup>7</sup>

The claims of these historians that sound training in the fundamental ways of thinking represented by history is an indispensable

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7. Ibid., pp. 203-5.

function of education at all levels and that curricular reorganizations are destructive if they cause students to lose sight of the ordered relationships that exist within the field of history both strongly suggest to the writer that they would maintain history as a separate subject in the curriculum. It is conceivable, of course, that the values defended in these claims could be met within a social problems course which gave an important place to history content. But the statement that the proposed scholarly commission should help administrators devise sound programs for the public schools in the basic disciplines (which obviously include history) seem to the writer to commit the group to the idea that the separate subject of history should be a part of the school curriculum.

As a first step in gathering data on the views of the historians, the writer consulted, under the name of each of them, the following bibliographical sources in the belief that together they should yield information on all published materials by the authors:

- 1) Library of Congress Catalogue of Titles.
- 2) Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature.
- 3) The Education Index.

These sources were checked for material published through the middle of 1954.

The categories of references below were then selected for survey from among the titles listed in the bibliographical sources on the ground that they seemed the most promising sources of information relevant to the inquiry:

- 1) books or magazine articles dealing directly with issues bearing upon the teaching of history;
- 2) books or magazine articles touching upon the nature of history, the teaching of history, and the teaching of the social studies;
- 3) prefatory statements and introductions in general histories and history textbooks;
- 4) books of general interest or of general educational import in the social sciences such as Charles Beard's The Economic Basis of Politics and Carl Becker's Freedom and Responsibility in the American Way of Life; and,
- 5) magazine articles on history topics or on subjects of general interest or educational import in the field of the social sciences such as Allan Nevins' "Or Is It the Wave of the Past?" from the New York Times magazine in December of 1940.

A survey of all the references yielded by the method described above revealed that many of the sources did not deal either directly or implicitly with the issues. In the course of this survey, the writer did not attempt to make a final selection of data but made complete notes on those portions of books and magazine articles which seemed to bear in any degree upon the controversies which were to form the basis for reporting the historians' views. More specifically, notes were made on the following types of material:

- 1) that which dealt explicitly with any of the issues;

- 2) that which treated the topic of the nature of history in such a way that clear implications related to the controversies in history-education were involved;
- 3) that which had any bearing on what history can do within the experience of students, on the ground that such information may be relevant to questions in the fields of curriculum, methodology or teacher training; and,
- 4) that which dealt with methods or curriculum in history or the social studies, on the ground that such content would very likely yield information on the controversies to be used in this study.

Once these notes were completed, the task of making an interpretation of each historian's views was begun. The notes on the works of each of the historians, in turn, were carefully read and re-read, and the passages which seemed to bear most sharply on the various issues were labeled according to the particular controversies they treated. These marked passages then became the basis of the writer's interpretations of the historians' views.

The following five chapters drawn from these passages are independent essays, each of which presents the views of one of the five historians. These essays constitute the raw data of this study on which the conclusions are to be based.

As these chapters were planned, it was thought that the five men were of such eminence as to deserve being heard attentively in their own words. Issues were therefore phrased to allow for a wide variety



of opinion and the free use of direct quotations from the relevant works of the historians and to make possible the reporting of the full sweep of ideas of each of these eminent scholars.

This method, however, raises a problem which is invariably a part of a study of this kind. It is necessary to abstract, that is, to pull ideas out of their context, in order to fit views into categories suitable for reporting conclusions. Separating ideas from an author's accompanying elaboration may do violence to that writer's position in the sense that an article or a book constitutes an integral whole and has its own intrinsic quality. As for this particular study, in view of the eminence of the men and the unique qualities to be found in the writings of each, it seemed impossible to do justice to their views and at the same time to perform a process of abstraction for purposes of reaching warranted conclusions. The writer, therefore, decided to write the essays without any effort toward sharply drawn conclusions and to leave the latter for the final chapter.

The issues as phrased have allowed the organization of these essays about a fairly clear common framework, and they have at least provided a common emphasis. In connection with these five chapters, the sole function of the issues is to furnish this unifying element. Instead of being sharply drawn the issues are so phrased as to allow an infinite number of possible points of view and to impose only as much structure as demanded by the need for some common thread of organization.

The issues used in the five chapters obviously need to be re-phrased for purposes of reporting specific points of agreement and disagreement among the historians. In the conclusions, therefore, the issues are so re-formulated as to focus on clear agreements and sharp disagreements.

Each of the five chapters opens with a brief summary of the historian's position as to what should be taught under the title history (or instead of history) and whether, how, why, for whom, and by whom history should be taught. Then follow what have seemed the most relevant selections from the historian's works and an interpretation drawn from them as to his views on the eleven issues.

All interpretative material throughout the study has been based upon (1) the historians' statements bearing directly on the issues, (2) implications drawn from their writings which are relevant to the controversies, and (3) actions on their part which are interpreted as reflecting their views on these questions. The last of these bases for drawing inferences requires a brief explanation. By an action bearing on one of the issues is meant simply behavior which suggests a particular stand on the controversy. For example, the preparation of a history textbook for high school students may, in conjunction with other circumstances, be interpreted to indicate the author's belief in the appropriateness of the study of history as a separate subject in the high schools. It is easy enough, however, to imagine a set of conditions under which one might turn out materials for a purpose he

would not fully endorse. This interpretation of actions as indicative of beliefs has at no point been automatic or mechanical; it represents a judgment based upon the full context of the action so far as it could be ascertained.

Throughout these interpretations what have seemed to be obvious contradictions, ambiguities, or fallacious arguments have been pointed up and analyzed. In addition, occasional speculations about a historian's position on a given issue are included. These are based not on anything he says and does related to the issue but on a general impression of him which has come from familiarity with a wide range of his writings within the field of this study. Wherever they appear, these speculations have been clearly identified. They have not been used as a basis for drawing conclusions.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE VIEWS OF ALBERT BUSHNELL HART (1854-1943) ON ISSUES BEARING UPON THE TEACHING OF HISTORY

##### INTRODUCTION

Albert Bushnell Hart has written more extensively on the teaching of history than any of the other subjects of this study except Charles A. Beard. His emphasis has been on methods of teaching and on the problem of presenting the story of the American heritage without threatening national unity, but he has dealt in some fashion with the subject matter of all the issues outlined in the preceding chapter.

Hart has been most explicit in his views on these issues:

1. whether world or European history should be studied in the schools in addition to American history;
2. whether the study of history should begin with a general survey of a broad time span or with a detailed study of a limited period;
3. whether students' earliest experience with history should take the form of a systematically organized course or of some more casual arrangement of biography, true adventures, and famous incidents; and,
4. whether history teachers and textbook writers should present

what they have found to be true or what seems calculated to promote national unity.

Hart has been far from explicit on the questions of requiring history in the schools and of urging the study of history for all students.

He deals with the issue of retaining history in the curriculum as a chronologically organized, separate subject without reference to the possible replacement of that subject by a combination social studies course focusing mainly on the present scene, and his views on the training of teachers and on the question of the group best qualified to determine the history curriculum for the schools are presented without any indication of his ever having heard of a quarrel between educators and historians on these matters. A possible explanation is that Hart was born almost twenty years earlier than any of the other historians who are subjects of this study and had completed his thinking on this subject during the first third of the present century when the battle-lines in the "history-social studies" and "education-liberal arts" controversies had not yet been sharply drawn.

The writer's presentation of Hart's position includes an interpretation both of ideas offered independently by him and of the famous report of 1899 on history in the secondary schools by the Committee of Seven of the American Historical Association. The work of the Committee of Seven is reported as representative of Hart's point of view on the following grounds: 1) Hart was a member of the committee;

2) all the members concurred in all of the recommendations and conclusions; 3) the report deals with many of the issues considered in this thesis.

The books and articles from which Hart's views have been drawn are the following:

Edward Channing, Albert Bushnell Hart, and Frederick Jackson Turner, Guide to the Study and Reading of American History. Boston: Ginn and Company, 1912.

(Hart authored Parts I, III, and V of this book, and it is from these portions of the work only that the writer has drawn material for this chapter.)

G. Stanley Hall, Editor. Methods of Teaching History. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1902.

Albert Bushnell Hart, Essentials in American History. New York: American Book Company, 1912.

"The Historical Opportunity in America," American Historical Review Volume 4, (October, 1898-July, 1899), pp. 1-20.

"The Modern Historical School of Scandals," Current History, 31 (February, 1930), pp. 968-70.

"Should American History Be Hero Worship?" Current History, 25 (March, 1927), pp. 778-802.

Studies in American Education. New York: Longmans, Green, and Company, 1895.

"The Writing of American History," Current History, 33 (March, 1931), pp. 858-861.

Albert Bushnell Hart and Mrs. W. C. Spencer, Mooseheart Course of Academic Study. Mooseheart Press, 1920.

The Study of History in Schools. Report to the American Historical Association by the Committee of Seven. Andrew C. McLaughlin, Chairman. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1899

Herbert B. Adams	Charles H. Haskins
George L. Fox	Lucy M. Salmon
Albert Bushnell Hart	H. Morse Stephens

Hart's views on whether, how, why, to whom, and by whom history should be taught in the schools and on what should be taught either under the title of history or in the place of history may be outlined as follows:<sup>1</sup>

#### Whether

1. He has written little concerning the requirement of history in the schools; he seems to take for granted a secure place for history in school curricula of the United States.

#### How

1. He expresses the belief that studying together related aspects of history and geography promotes a thorough understanding of the human scene.
2. He suggests that general histories covering long time spans are not comprehensible; that courses dealing in some detail with limited time periods may be studied effectively.
3. He supports the position that students' beginning experience with history should take the form of becoming familiar with

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1. This summary does not draw upon the report of the Committee of Seven.

the subject's content through biographies and legends.

4. He seems convinced that students should be taught what is true and be encouraged to cultivate the habits of seeking accuracy and employing scientific method. He also seems to think it is important in the presentation of history content to foster enlightened patriotism. He does not indicate awareness of any possibility that teachers and writers may sometimes be forced to choose between presenting what is true and promoting national loyalty.

#### Why

He takes the view that

1. the process of comparing past and present events, which is possible within a chronological study of history, contributes uniquely to an understanding of the present scene;
2. gaining knowledge of history content promotes ability to discriminate between the significant and the trivial, to analyze, and to generalize; and,
3. the study of history provides opportunity for incidental ethical training.

#### To Whom

1. His work on methodology and his participation in curriculum making in one combination elementary and secondary school seem to rest on the assumption that history may appropriately be taught to all students.



By Whom

1. He implies that teachers trained in both history and pedagogy should teach history in the schools.

What

1. He thinks it appropriate that all American students study the history of their own country.
2. He expresses the belief that the study of world history, both ancient and modern, is appropriate in the schools and that such study helps students understand American history.
3. He suggests that history should be maintained in the schools as a chronologically organized subject.

## THE ISSUES

1. Should American youth study American history only or American history plus world or European history?

Hart's views on this issue are clearly and specifically set forth at several points in his writing. He thinks United States history should be studied in the schools. But, he not only expresses the opinion that the history of countries other than the United States should be studied; he suggests in addition that learning about the history of Greece, Rome, and Europe is necessary to a clear comprehension of American history. The position of the Committee of Seven is substantially the same as Hart's, although the grounds set forth in support of the committee's view are more elaborate.

In Guide to the Study and Reading of American History, he says American history should be studied in the schools. The study of the history of countries from which American institutions have originated, he also asserts, is a necessary accompaniment to the study of American history. And he outlines the order in which the history of various countries is offered in some of the elementary schools and the order in which he would offer history courses in the high school grades:

There should be no study of American history without somewhere in the course also a study of the history and conditions of the countries and eras from which much of American civilization is derived. Greek and Roman history are important to the American youth, not because originally written in Greek and Latin, but because our ideas of the government of republics, of the concentration and diffusion of power, and of the nature of law are largely an inheritance from those wonderful peoples. American children need cross light, contacts with other races and experiences. On the other hand, American children need formal teaching on the conditions that they see around them in their own towns, cities, states, and union. In many schools the method of historical treatment is from within outward, beginning with the town meeting or city government, and widening to state, nation, all America, and the rest of the world. For high school and college pupils, the obverse of this method is desirable--beginning with a study of ancient, medieval, or English history, as preceding and conditioning American history.<sup>2</sup>

In 1920, Hart and Mrs. W. C. Spencer prepared a publication titled Mooseheart Course of Academic Study which outlines a course of study for the Mooseheart School from the first grade through the eleventh. The following items appear on the outline for the high school years as required courses:

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2. Edward Channing, Albert Bushnell Hart, and Frederick Jackson Turner, Guide to the Study and Reading of American History, Boston: Ginn and Company, 1912, pp. 4-5.

- Seventh grade -- History and Civics  
(American history)
- Eighth grade -- History and Civics  
(American history)
- Ninth grade -- Ancient History (half year)
- Tenth grade -- Medieval History (half year)
- Eleventh grade -- Modern History<sup>3</sup>

The authors indicate that this course of study, which presumably was devised by Hart in his role of director of academic education for the school, should be suggestive for other schools as they approach curricular matters.<sup>4</sup> Such an indication by a person in such a role points to the opinion that students in the schools of the United States may appropriately study history other than that of their own country.

The Committee of Seven of the American Historical Association in its 1899 report recommends a course of study in history for high school students which ranges from ancient to American history. All of the fields of history included in the recommendation have to be studied, the committee claims, since omitting one would leave critical gaps in students' historical knowledge. More important, these historians say, the study of the whole story from the ancient to the present world makes each part more meaningful than it would be if studied in isolation:

As a thorough and systematic course of study, we recommend four years of work, beginning with ancient history and ending with American history. . . .

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3. Albert Bushnell Hart and Mrs. W. C. Spencer, Mooseheart Course of Academic Study. Mooseheart Press, 1920, pp. 241-2.

4. Ibid., p. 3.

- (1) Ancient History. . . .
- (2) Medieval and Modern European History. . . .
- (3) English History. . . .
- (4) American History and Civil Government. . . .

No one of these fields can be omitted without leaving serious lacunae in the pupil's knowledge of history. Each department has its special value and teaches its special lesson; above all, the study of the whole field gives a meaning to each portion that it cannot have by itself.<sup>5</sup>

In the same work, the Committee further defends a program covering the range from ancient to modern history on the grounds that such a scope places particular nations and times in their world setting of conditioning factors, thus allowing students to get an accurate picture of the times and places they are considering. An additional reason advanced by the committee for such a course of study is that it "broadens the mental horizon" of students and contributes to their "cultural" growth:

We think that a course covering the whole field of history is desirable, because it gives something like a proper perspective and proportion; because the history of man's activities is one subject, and the present is the product of all the past; because such a study broadens the mental horizon and gives breadth and culture; because it is desirable that pupils should come to as full a realization as possible of their present surroundings, by seeing the long course of the race behind them; because they ought to have a general conspectus of history in order that more particular studies of nations or of periods may be seen in something like actual relation with others.<sup>6</sup>

In summary, Hart defends as a part of the school curriculum the inclusion of ancient, medieval, and modern European, as well as

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5. The Study of History in Schools, Report to the American Historical Association by the Committee of Seven, Andrew C. McLaughlin, Chairman, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1899, pp. 34-5.

6. Ibid., p. 48.

American history courses on these grounds:

- 1) the history of countries which made contributions to American institutions is a necessary accompaniment to the study of United States history. (Implicit in this claim is the idea that knowledge of the history of other countries from which parts of American culture is derived adds to students' understanding of American civilization.)

The Committee of Seven, in brief, advances the idea that the whole field of history should be studied in the high schools for these reasons:

- 1) omitting one of the fields would leave serious gaps in the historical knowledge of students;
- 2) studying the whole field adds meaning to each part that it cannot have when studied by itself;
- 3) covering the range from ancient Greece to modern America places (for students) various times and places in the world setting which has conditioned and is conditioning them; and
- 4) studying the history of the world from distant times to the present enlarges the student's intellectual world and promotes his "cultural" development.

2. Should history be required in the schools rather than merely made available?

Hart has written little bearing upon this issue. At one point in his writing, however, he has upheld the requirement of history in a school with which he was associated.

The report of the Committee of Seven makes no direct statement to the effect that history should be mandatory in the schools, but it clearly so implies.

Hart has shown less concern about the problem of whether history should be required in the schools than he has about effective methods for teaching the subject. His introductory statement in Part I of Guide to the Study and Reading of American History to the effect that the study of American history is considered at least important and often essential in the work of students indicated to the writer that he is confident of a secure and undisputed place for history in the school curriculum. He says,

The development of sources, secondary books, and textbooks is a proof that the American people look upon their history as worth reading about, worth studying, and worth teaching to their children. In schools, academies, and universities, American history is recognized as an important and often an essential subject.<sup>7</sup>

The preceding statement suggests the hypothesis that Hart has written little of requiring history in the schools because he has recognized no threat to history as an important part of the school curriculum.

The detailed ideas on method which have been presented by Hart in Guide to the Study and Reading of American History and Methods of Teaching History (edited by G. Stanley Hall) plus his own history textbooks and source books for use in the schools constitute further evidence that this historian takes for granted the secure place of history.

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7. Edward Channing, Albert Bushnell Hart, and Frederick Jackson Turner, Guide to the Study and Reading of American History, p. 3.

At one point in his writing, Hart makes what may be interpreted as a plea for requiring history in America's schools. It will be recalled that the Mooseheart School's course of study in history included a number of required courses. It will also be remembered that the course of study was offered with the idea that it might be "suggestive for other schools."<sup>8</sup> Saying that a course of study is "suggestive" for other schools is not necessarily the same as saying that it ought to be adopted in toto. It is at least possible, however, that Hart and Mrs. Spencer, his co-author, could have had the idea that other schools should require history as Mooseheart had done. And it may be safely said that in the case of one particular school with which he has identified himself, Hart has committed himself to the requirement of history.

The Committee of Seven does not explicitly claim that the study of history should be required in the schools. However, the members of the Committee point out that it is necessary for students to gain the broad general knowledge and understanding and the comprehension of the concept of change that the study of history brings:

. . . . We believe that it is the imperative duty of every high school and academy to teach boys and girls the elementary knowledge of the political machinery which they will be called upon to manage as citizens of a free state; we insist also that they should have the broader knowledge, the more intelligent spirit, that comes from a study of other men and other times. They should be led to see that society is in movement, that what one sees about him is not the eternal but the transient,

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8. Supra, p. 45.

and that in the processes of change virtue must be militant if it is to be triumphant.<sup>9</sup>

In summary, it may be said that Hart reveals little concern about the issue of requiring history in the schools. He has endorsed the idea of compulsory history, however, to the extent that he has been willing to make history mandatory in a school with which he was associated.

The Committee of Seven membership has made no explicit claim that history should be required in the schools. These historians do say, nevertheless, that there are certain imperative understandings which students may gain from a study of history.

3. Should the study of history be strongly urged for all students in the nation's schools or only for those who are expected to become "leaders"?

Hart is far from explicit concerning his view on this issue. His willingness to work on problems of methodology posed by a widespread study of history in the nation's schools is indicative of his acceptance of the idea of offering history to all or nearly all students. The Committee of Seven seems to imply that the study of history should be urged as a part of civic education for the general run of students, not simply for those who may be leaders.

In an article written for the American Historical Association at the turn of the century Hart observes that the study of history is

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9. The Study of History in Schools, Report to the American Historical Association by the Committee of Seven, Andrew C. McLaughlin, Chairman, p. 19.



well known in every grade and that the subject is not simply for the attention of scholars. He further asserts that with the study of history going on in all grades, the question of methodology is a serious one for both historians and educators. And, apparently accepting his own challenge, he addresses himself to the problem of improving methods of history instruction:

Since history is not only a pursuit for the learned but a study familiar in schools of every grade, the question of methods of teaching has come to be serious both for historians and for educators. Probably no branch of learning has been habitually worse taught in America: methods of parrot repetition of stale textbook phrases have crept all the way up from the district school to the university. . . . To improve the teaching of history in schools, we must look, as a preliminary, to a more enlightened public opinion on the preservation and use of materials.<sup>10</sup>

Observing that the study of history is not in fact restricted to the learned, but is rather a familiar subject to all does not necessarily constitute support for the idea that all students should learn history. But Hart's indication of the methodological problem brought about by the nearly universal study of history and his own work in methodology indicate to the writer that he at least accepts as a basis for his own action the view that history should be studied by the generality of students.

In summary, then, Hart does not make definite his view on the question of whether history should be recommended for all students or for potential leaders, only. His concern about the methodological

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10. Albert Bushnell Hart, "The Historical Opportunity in America," American Historical Review, Volume 4 (October, 1898-July, 1899), p. 18.

problems posed by widespread study of history in all grades and his work for all grades from the elementary to college level on methods of teaching history suggest at least a willingness on his part to contribute to the effectiveness of history courses for the general run of students. And the inclusion of required high school history courses and of history work in the elementary grades at a school with which he was associated plus his statement that the course of study should be suggestive for other schools lead to the inference that Hart accepted the idea of offering history for all students in the schools.

The Committee of Seven has said that citizenship training is furthered by the study of history and that the study of history should be promoted by the public schools. In the absence of even the faintest suggestion to the contrary, the writer assumes that the Committee favored citizenship training for all and advocated the study of history for all.

4. Should history be maintained in the school curriculum as an organized discipline or should its content merely be employed in contributing to the understanding of social problems being studied under some other curricular arrangement?

By implication, Hart favors maintaining history as a separate subject in the school curriculum when at one point in his writing he expresses the view that historical continuity should be preserved by the history teacher, that chronological ordering of history content should be preserved in the classroom. Along with this specific stand, he points out the value of knowledge of history content as a means of

understanding the present and its problems and of gaining both intellectual skills and capacities for making effective moral judgments. This emphasis on what knowledge of history may do within the experience of students suggests that, even if he consented to replacement of history courses in the schools by combination social studies or social problems classes, he would give history content a very prominent place in such social studies courses. He is not unwilling to correlate the study of history with other subjects. As a matter of fact, he emphasizes the idea that more complete understanding of the human scene results from relating the study of history and geography.

The Committee of Seven takes the stand that history as a separate subject should be a part of the school curriculum on the ground that the study of the subject contributes substantially to a liberal education. The members of the Committee also indicate that knowledge of history content gives a clearer understanding of current institutions and problems than would be possible without it. And they specify that social studies courses should not take precedence over history when there is not a place in the curriculum for both.

Writing in 1902, Hart takes his stand against modifying the chronological ordering of history topics in the schools. Arguing that the process of comparing current happenings with those of the past stimulates students to think, he cautions the history teacher against working "from the present backwards," apparently on the ground that the

connection between events in sequence will not be apprehended readily unless dealt with chronologically:

With all the restrictions laid upon him, it is still possible for the instructor to select a point of view which will oblige his students to think, and to see the relation of one part of history to another; it is the comparison of the past with the present. No history is better adapted to the method than our own; no treatment lends more life to a course, or appeals more strongly to young minds. The connection between a subject under discussion, and the same subject in our present system, is always useful in itself and fructifying to the mind. . . . Care should be taken, however, to preserve the consistency of the course; it is a mistake to work from the present backward. If each topic, as it comes up in its logical order, is sketched out clear to its present status, the connection of events with each other need not be broken.<sup>11</sup>

The writer presumes from the context in which the phrase appears that by taking up topics "in their logical order" Hart means "in their chronological order." His admonition, then, would mean, for example, that the Spoils System in the United States probably would be introduced in connection with a study of either Thomas Jefferson's or Andrew Jackson's administrations (according to the teacher's notion of when the Spoils System became a significant phenomenon). The further examination of the topic might include consideration of the growth through the middle years of the nineteenth century of the practice of rewarding the faithful of victorious parties, the establishment of the civil service system under the Pendelton Act, and the subsequent revisions of Civil Service laws to increase the number of jobs subject to appointment

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11. G. Stanley Hall, Editor, Methods of Teaching History. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1902.

through examination and to correct inequities in civil service appointment practices. According to Hart, a study of the Spoils System should not be approached through a survey of present-day employment practices at the various levels of government in the United States.

Hart's contention that "each topic as it comes up in its logical order" should be "sketched out to its present status" could be interpreted to mean that every topic considered in a history class should be studied from its beginning to the present. If such an interpretation were accepted, the argument could be made that the process of comparing related past and present events would very likely break the continuity of the larger historical story, a result which Hart would not favor. It is not necessary, however, to interpret Hart as proposing that every possible topic in history should have its present and past aspects compared by students. He may quite as reasonably be taken to mean only that comparison may be made between some present events and their related antecedents for the purpose of fostering reflection and interest.

Writing in 1898 about American attitudes toward the Spanish, Hart expresses concern that citizens of America should hold beliefs about present problems on the basis of meager information about the general area of experience in which the beliefs fall, and he suggests that giving students a "sense of the sequence of historical events" might provide the kind of information which would allow them to form beliefs rooted in facts. This suggestion, taken alone, does not necessarily call for studying history as a separate subject. Unless it is claimed

that Hart's writing is inconsistent on this issue, however, the argument reported above that the chronological ordering of events must be preserved in the process of comparing past with present events would be applied by him in the case of such past events as those leading up to the Spanish-American War and such "present" ones as the War itself.

Hart says,

Without knowing the details of the Spanish-American domination, the nation has somehow a consciousness that it has grown intolerable. If there be a fault, it is not that of the makers of history, but of the historians, who have failed to set clearly before their countrymen the course of our diplomatic policy; and of historical teachers who have not imbued their students or pupils with the sense of the sequence of historical events.<sup>12</sup>

Besides implying that history should be maintained in the curriculum as a separate subject, Hart places emphasis on what history can do within the experience of students. His comments on the functions of knowledge of history content lead the writer to the view that Hart would make work with such content an important part of a combination social studies course, even if he accepted the idea of replacing formal history by such a class. He claims, for example, that the process of gaining knowledge of history will help cultivate skill in differentiating between significant and minor ideas and ability to analyze, generalize, and suspend judgment. He views historical investigation as particularly effective in promoting these intellectual skills:

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12. Albert Bushnell Hart, "The Historical Opportunity in America," American Historical Review, Volume 4 (October, 1898-July, 1899), p. 2.

. . . . Historical investigation is the most valuable sort of training, because it requires patience and thoroughness in searching for material, judgment in selecting out of it the cogent facts, a peculiar use of the analytical powers in arranging and classifying it, a high degree of mental force in making generalizations, and quick imagination in so stating the results as to appeal to other minds.<sup>13</sup>

Continuing his enumeration of the skills and understandings promoted by a study of history, he says moral training may be effected by discussions involving history content. He expresses the opinion that discussion of such topics as witchcraft, the Boston Massacre, or nullification may be made the medium of ethical teaching, of the greater effect because introduced incidentally.<sup>14</sup> This assertion could well mean that consideration of the possible motives and the arguments of such men as Daniel Webster and John C. Calhoun in the nullification controversy might lead to such processes as the weighing of alternatives open to those taking the respective positions and as the consideration of justification and consequences involved in each side's decision. Such discussion, then, could affect students' attitudes about how one decides what he thinks is right and about what it means to be fair to the position taken by those opposing one's own point of view.

In one sense, Hart appears to favor a combination social studies course. He believes related facts and ideas from the fields of geography and history should be studied together on the ground that

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13. Edward Channing, Albert Bushnell Hart, and Frederick Jackson Turner, Guide to the Study and Reading of American History, p. 25.

14. Ibid., p. 207.

history content is made more clear when geographic influences are pointed out. It will be noted, however, that while proposing the combination study of history and geography, he does not propose that the chronological ordering of history be abandoned. He says,

Without an adequate knowledge of the physical and historical geography of the United States,--the natural "lay of the land," and the process of subdivision by artificial lines,--the historical student is all at sea. . . . From the earliest study of geography the features of the continent should be treated as having a connection with the settlement of the country, with the development of its industrial life, and with political events. . . .

Every child who studies American history at all ought to have some notion of the successive forms of the political geography of the country. . . .

The first use of the maps is to illustrate the territorial development of the country by bringing before the eye the successive cessions and purchases. At the same time the perplexing boundary controversies may be made clear; the close connection between annexations and the inner political history of the country is often brought out in startling relief when presented to the eye. . . .<sup>15</sup>

The preceding argument refers only to American history and geography. Since the connection between American history and American geography is not unique, however, the writer assumes Hart would apply his ideas about teaching the two subjects together to history and geography in general.

The Committee of Seven argues for the subject of history as a basic part of the liberal arts curriculum. Its humanistic aspects develop breadth of vision and capacity for sharing the feelings and interests

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15. Ibid., pp. 208-9.

of others, while its scientific aspects teach students to search painstakingly for what is true, they suggest. Thus, it is claimed, no other subject combines the educational possibilities that history does:

History has a central position among the subjects of the curriculum. Like literature, it deals with man, and appeals to the sympathy, the imagination, and the emotional nature of the pupils. Like natural science, it employs methods of careful and unprejudiced investigation. It belongs to the humanities, for its essential purpose is to disclose human life; but it also searches for data, groups them, and builds generalizations from them. . . . Its methods are similar to scientific methods, and are valuable in inculcating in the pupil a regard for accuracy and a reverence for truth. It corrects the formalistic bias of language by bringing the pupil into sympathetic contact with actualities and with the mind of man as it has reacted on his environment. It gives breadth, outlook, and human interest which are not easily developed by the study of natural phenomena. Thus, as a theoretical proposition, at least, the assertion that the story of life and the onward movement of men, not their language or their physical environment, should form the centre of a liberal course would seem to leave little ground for argument.<sup>16</sup>

The function of clarifying present problems and institutions for students, the committee claims, is best served by a knowledge of the past. And, they add, if a choice must be made between history and government, then, history should be the course offered:

The pupil should see the growth of the institutions which surround him; he should see the work of man; he should study the living concrete facts of the past; he should know of nations that have risen and fallen; he should see tyranny, vulgarity, greed, benevolence, patriotism, self-sacrifice, brought out in the lives and works of men. So strongly has this very

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16. The Study of History in Schools. Report to the American Historical Association by the Committee of Seven, Andrew C. McLaughlin, Chairman, p. 32.



thought taken hold of writers of civil government, that they no longer content themselves with a description of the government as it is but describe at considerable length the origin and development of the institutions of which they speak. While we have no desire to underestimate the value of civil government as a secondary study, especially if it is written and taught from the historical point of view, we desire to emphasize the thought that appreciation and sympathy for the present is best secured by a study of the past. . . .

What we desire to recommend is simply this, that in any school where there is no time for sound, substantial courses in both civil government and history, the history be taught in such a way that the pupil will gain a knowledge of the political system which is a product of that history; and that, where there is time for separate courses, they be taught not as isolated, but as interrelated and interdependent subjects.<sup>17</sup>

The importance of knowledge of history content to an understanding of the present and to social reform is emphasized by the committee at another point in its report. The members do not specify that the history content should fall within a chronologically ordered history course, probably because no alternative would occur to them as even conceivable. They say,

While it is doubtless true that too much may be made of the idea that history furnishes us with rules, precepts, and maxims which may be used as immutable principles, as unerring guides for the conduct of the statesman and the practical politician, or as means of foretelling the future, it is equally true that progress comes by making additions to the past or by its silent modification. All our institutions, our habits of thought and modes of action are inheritances from preceding ages: no conscious advance, no worthy reform, can be secured without both a knowledge of the present and an appreciation of how forces have worked in the social and political organization of former times. If this be so, need we seriously argue that the boys and girls in the schoolroom should be introduced to the past, which has created the

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17. Ibid., pp. 18-19 and 84-85.

present--that historical-mindedness should be in some slight measure bred within them, and that they should be given the habit, or the beginnings of a habit, of considering what has been, when they discuss what is or what should be.<sup>18</sup>

Hart's position, in brief review, on the issue under present discussion is this:

- 1) History as a separate, chronologically organized subject should be maintained in the curriculum.
- 2) Related aspects of geography and history should be studied together.
- 3) Knowledge of history content helps students gain skill in analysis and generalization, aids in the ethical training of young people, and promotes understanding of the present scene.

The Committee of Seven pleads for a place in the curriculum for the subject of history because its members consider history a central and important part of a liberal education. These historians add that knowledge of history content promotes a clear comprehension of the current scene which justifies giving history precedence over government in the curriculum.

5. Are controversial issues best understood by pursuing a chronological study of history which reveals their past forms clearly and to some extent outlines their present forms, or are they best understood by a direct consideration of the current aspects of the issues with historical background brought in only when it is clearly necessary for understanding?

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18. Ibid., pp. 19-21.

Hart's view discussed in the foregoing section that knowledge of history content is an important means of understanding present problems is applicable to controversial issues, since such issues are subsumed by the larger classification, present problems. And in view of his insistence that the chronological ordering of history content be preserved in the classroom in the process of comparing past and present events or problems it seems to the writer that he must necessarily support the position that controversial issues should be handled within a chronological study of history. The method of this study, however, yields no direct statement by Hart on this issue.

As the discussion of the preceding issue revealed, the Committee of Seven indicates that knowledge of historical background is the most important factor in the comprehension of current problems and says that courses dealing with current aspects of social problems and issues are of secondary value to history courses in clarifying these problems.

6. Is history most effectively learned by starting with a detailed study of a limited period or area or by beginning with a general survey of a broad area or time span?

Hart's position on this issue is that, whether beginners or not, students must have a limited period to study if they are to comprehend history. His apparent grounds are that general histories such as the history of Europe, unless subdivided, are too broad for the student to handle effectively.

The Committee of Seven membership holds the same view as Hart's. These historians base their position on the claim that general history

for students features one of two approaches, either of which is largely devoid of meaning for readers: 1) the chronicling of unaccompanied data or 2) the presentation of unsupported generalization.

Writing in Studies in American Education, Hart introduces the idea as one of primary importance that the study of history requires consideration of a specific period, and he says that it is not possible to study a broad subject field (i.e., science, literature or history) by trying to learn the whole:

In the study of history the first essential is that we should have before us not general history but some definite subject. Well does the writer remember his struggle to learn Freeman's Outlines, and ill does he remember any part of those Outlines, except the distinction between orthodox Christianity and Arianism--and just what that distinction was has escaped him at this moment. Such a book as Lavisse's Political History of Europe is interesting, suggestive, and broadening, but it only attempts to describe tendencies and general results. For purposes of study, a general history is no more possible than a general textbook on science, or a general treatise on mathematics, or a general history of all literature.<sup>19</sup>

Describing the process he considers an effective means of attaining the object of historical study--getting a "picture of the main events and spirit of the times" being studied--Hart seems to the writer to give a clue to his insistence on restricting historical study at a given time to a limited period and area. This three-step process of the overview, the detailed study, and the examination of sources, which he advocates and describes, the writer submits, would surely not

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19. Albert Bushnell Hart, Studies in American Education, New York: Longmans, Green, and Company, 1895, pp. 76-7.

be considered feasible by Hart (or anyone with a more than casual acquaintance with the subject of history) when applied to a broad period of history. He says,

The object of the historical student is to bring before his mind a picture of the main events and the spirit of the times which he studies. The first step is to get a general view from a brief book; the second step is to enlarge it from more elaborate works, reading more than one, and to use some system of notes logically arranged; the final step is to read some of the contemporary writers. Having done these three things carefully, the historical student carries away an impression of his period which will never be effaced.<sup>20</sup>

The Committee of Seven rejects the idea of asking students to study general history on these two grounds:

- 1) such study either consists of barren listing of dates and events which does not make plain the relationships among these data; or,
- 2) it is made up of scholars' generalizations which students are encouraged to accept without examination.

The members outline their first objection to the study of general history in the schools as follows:

We do not recommend a short course in general history because such a course necessitates one of two modes of treatment, neither of which is sound and reasonable. By one method, energy is devoted to the dreary, and perhaps profitless task of memorizing facts, dates, names of kings and queens, and the rise and fall of dynasties; there is no opportunity to see how facts arose or what they effected, or to study the material properly, or to see the events in simple form as one followed upon another, or to become acquainted with the historical

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20. Ibid., p. 90.

method of handling definite concrete facts and drawing inferences from them. . . .<sup>21</sup>

The following argument is presented by the Committee as a second reason for rejecting the study of general history in the schools:

By the second method pupils are led to deal with large and general ideas which are often quite beyond their comprehension, ideas which are general inferences drawn by the learned historian from a well-stored treasure house of definite data; they are taught to accept unquestioningly broad generalizations, the foundations of which they cannot possibly examine,--as they must do if they are to know how the historical student builds his inferences, or how one gains knowledge of the general truths of history.<sup>22</sup>

The Committee is claiming, then, that the study of general history finds students either memorizing data without doing much generalizing about it or trying to learn generalizations without acquaintance with the data upon which they rest. Thus, in the portion of a general history dealing with early American history, students might encounter a listing of events to this effect: "Important acts passed by the English Parliament shortly before the American Revolution were the Navigation Laws to regulate shipping and the Stamp Act and the Townshend Acts to collect taxes from the colonists." Or the students might read instead of the preceding account this unsupported general statement: "The English attempt to force the American colonists to fit into the mercantilist system plus the colonists' independent spirit which had developed during the period of salutary neglect brought on the American Revolution."

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21. The Study of History in Schools. Report to the American Historical Association by The Committee of Seven, Andrew C. McLaughlin, Chairman, pp. 44-5.

22. Ibid., pp. 45-46.

In neither case, according to the stand of the Committee of Seven, would the students be learning to put information together in a meaningful fashion. Further clarifying their position, they point out that high school students can, with a detailed study of a particular period, learn to see relationships among data:

. . . . While we do not think that a secondary school pupil can be brought to handle large generalizations, we do believe that, if the time devoted to a period of history be sufficiently long to enable him to deal with the acts of individual men and to see their work, he can be taught to group his facts; and that a power of analysis and construction, a capacity for seeing relationships and causes, an ability to grasp a general situation and to understand how it came to be, can be developed in him; and that he can be brought to see that for the historian nothing is but everything is becoming.<sup>23</sup>

The members of the Committee have said high school students can learn to "grasp a general situation and to understand how it came to be." The writer fails to see how understanding a general state of affairs and its conditioning factors differs from the process of "handling a large generalization, "which the committee says secondary school students cannot do. Understanding the role which such factors as the imposition of the mercantilist system by the British and as the independent spirit of the colonists played in bringing about the American Revolution, for example, constitutes a "grasp of a general situation" and "how it came to be"; such understanding seems to the writer to involve the same thought processes as seeing meaning, through the method of putting data (passage of the Stamp Act by Parliament, Colonial

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23. Ibid., pp. 46-17.

violation of the Navigation Acts, etc.) together, in the following large generalization: the English policy promoting the mercantile system and the colonists' spirit of independence were important causes of the American Revolution.

If the Committee means by large generalizations propositions which may account for a much greater area of man's experience than the foregoing one, the writer is yet unconvinced that high school students cannot handle such ideas. One of the "largest" generalizations in the field of history known to the present writer--institutions tend to persist long after the conditions which gave rise to them have disappeared--can be meaningful to a student if he has a few examples such as the electoral college system and the "Solid South" in the United States which he can see as data supporting the idea. It is readily admitted that the high school student's understanding of the generalization is not on the same level as that of the historical scholar who can draw supporting data from a wide knowledge of world history. But such an admission does not constitute a claim that high school students cannot "handle large generalizations."

To summarize their positions on the matter of whether beginning history courses should be surveys of long periods, then, both Hart and the Committee of Seven have expressed the belief that studying large eras is not a meaningful operation for students. Hart bases his view on the implicit point that a broad sweep of history cannot be broken down into sufficiently concrete related details for the human mind to



understand. The Committee claims general history requires one or the other of two more or less meaningless kinds of presentations of content: 1) the listing of events and dates with little effort to show relationship or 2) generalizations which are not supported by facts.

7. Should young students become familiar with the content of history through casual and unorganized experiences with it before attempting a systematic study of history?

Hart recommends that beginning experiences with history content should take the form of hearing and reading about the legends and famous figures in a given field of history. He does not offer grounds for his position. The Committee of Seven does not deal directly with this issue. The members do seem to take it for granted that at the secondary school level history shall be a systematically organized subject. They do not consider the topic of history in the elementary school.

Dealing with the problem of organizing the content at various age levels in American history classes, in Guide to the Study and Reading of American History, Hart outlines a program of study which would start with unsystematized work and advance to an organized study of history which included attention to related fields. He says,

Children should usually first hear and then read the legends and stories, then take up the lives of notable people. When sufficiently advanced, they should cover the whole field in a simple textbook, later they should go over the ground again with a more advanced textbook, wider reading, topical work, and compositions on subjects chosen from American history, taking up as parallel studies civil government and the principles of economics. Throughout the course, historical geography ought to be taught, reiterated, and enforced,

till it comes home to the child's mind as an inseparable part of historical study.<sup>24</sup>

Although it is possible to assume that Hart had no particular reason for proposing the preceding arrangement other than whim, familiarity, or personal preference, it seems reasonable to suppose that a reputable historian writing on the subject of teaching history would base such a proposal on a theory of learning of some sort. If the writer's supposition is correct, he may consistently have had one or both of the following related reasons for offering the proposed arrangement: 1) a conviction that young children do not deal effectively with a highly organized content subject, and 2) a commitment to the idea that for effecting maximum understanding, familiarity with some of the "stuff" of a subject is important before a systematic study of the subject is attempted.

The proposal by the Committee of Seven that secondary schools offer four years of history beginning with ancient history and ending with American history<sup>25</sup> indicates clearly enough, in the absence of references to a study of heroes and legends, that the membership assumes systematic organization of history at the high school level. The Committee's report does not cover the elementary grades.

In summary, then, Hart would not make students' earliest experiences with history content highly organized ones, but rather would offer historical legends, biographies, and anecdotes to the beginner.

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24. Edward Channing, Albert Bushnell Hart, and Frederick Jackson Turner, Guide to the Study and Reading of American History, p. 24.

25. Supra, p. 46.

8. Should the history teacher or the writer of history textbooks rigorously confine himself to material he has found to be true, or should he sometimes depart from this principle for the purpose of strengthening the loyalty of people to their country or of unifying them?

Hart takes the position that students should learn what is true and become devoted to the idea of seeking accuracy and of adhering to the scientific method. On the other hand, he suggests that it is important in the presentation of history content to promote enlightened patriotism. Hart appears to be convinced the American record will stand close scrutiny and still inspire devotion to the country, so that he sees no incompatibility in America between teaching what is true and cultivating loyalty to country. In this connection he attacks ultra-nationalistic writers on the one hand and writers who have been sharply critical of national heroes on the other, holding that both groups distort the story of American development.

The Committee of Seven defends the study of history partly on the ground that it can promote regard for accuracy. So far as the study of American history is concerned, these historians believe one of its main purposes should be the promotion of intelligent loyalty to country.

The study of history, Hart points out in an article written in 1895, consists of arriving at independent conclusions about historical development based on the most accurate information possible. Hart says,

What we learn from the atmosphere of newspaper gossip in which we are all enveloped, even what we gain in the school room, lacks the essential quality of study, because it usually means the acceptance of whatever reaches us from the first comer, the first book, or the first teacher. Learning by heart tables of dynasties, presidents, or battles, is not

studying history. Brer Rabbit was always "studyin'," but study with him meant, not committing the statement of a textbook, but putting his mind upon the problem before him, considering how far he could depend upon the historical statements made to him by Brer Fox, and soberly discounting the oratorical flights of Brer Turkey Buzzard. The study of history, then, means the attempt to form for one's self an independent judgment upon historical events, a judgment based upon the most trustworthy accounts within reach.<sup>26</sup>

Hart asserts once more in a discussion on the source method that it is necessary for history students to learn what is true. Studying the sources and using various techniques for learning to recognize scholarly, reliable works are important processes in finding out what is true.

The primary necessity in history is to know the truth, and that implies that every student should see for himself how history is written. This is best done by some study of the sources; hence all good methods include at least information about the original records on which a statement is based. In schools this part of the work can usually be done by the use of extracts from the sources; in colleges a considerable body of sources on limited subjects may be used; in graduate work the student must learn to exhaust all the sources of information on his subject.

The next essential is to train the student to handle secondary works with discrimination. In schools this may be done by using several parallel books, and comparing them with standard authors; in colleges by wide collateral reading; in advanced work by studying authors and tracking them back to their sources. One of the first things to break up in a child's mind is the confidence that "it must be so because the book says so," he must learn to discriminate between accurate and inaccurate books, between accounts written at second or third hand and records of contemporaries.<sup>27</sup>

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26. Albert Bushnell Hart, Studies in American Education, pp. 75-6.

27. Edward Channing, Albert Bushnell Hart, and Frederick Jackson Turner, Guide to the Study and Reading of American History, pp. 22-3.

The foregoing assertions do not mean indifference on Hart's part toward promoting loyalty to country within the framework of the history class. In a number of his works, and especially in some of his later writings, he places strong emphasis on the power of historical content to affect national loyalty. In the introductory pages of a history for young people, Essentials in American History, for example, he says he has selected content which builds pride in country and which brings before the youth of America significant national ideals:

Whatever the lack of skill in combining into a unity the broad and manifold phases of a great nation's life, I have at least tried to write about things that count, to describe events which give us pride in being Americans, to set before my young countrymen ideals that have made for national greatness.<sup>28</sup>

This outline of his basis for selection of content implies to the writer that its author considers it appropriate or desirable for textbook writers to present material which promotes "pride in being Americans."

Although he seems to look with favor upon the practice of cultivating national unity through historical content, he deplures attempts to glorify the nation's development at the expense of truth through such devices as depicting the nation's early generations and heroes as faultless. For example, in "Should American History Be Hero Worship?" he says:

Since the World War there has been a curious recrudescence of the worship of the Revolution in frantic denunciations against writers charged with "treason to American

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28. Albert Bushnell Hart, Essentials in American History. New York: American Book Company, 1912, p. 7.

traditions." This includes demands that school children shall not be allowed to use books which reveal the difficulty of bringing the colonists up to the point of independence and the fact that there was dissent among Americans during the Revolution. Certainly not all the patriots and fathers of the Constitution can have been equally patriotic and free from later criticism inasmuch as they so cordially belabored each other. . . .

The one conclusive lesson of the Revolution which ought always to be taught is that, whatever their previous differences, the American people preferred a separate Republican, and federated government; and their ultimate right to that decision was settled once and for all at Boston and Saratoga and Trenton and Yorktown.<sup>29</sup>

Hart's own contention that "the American people agreed on a Republican and federated government" may be questioned in view of the limited participation in making and ratifying the Constitution and the disagreements among the Founding Fathers. The sincerity of his commitment to the idea that students should be taught the truth is not necessarily brought thereby into doubt. One can just as reasonably judge Hart to have been in disagreement with the generally accepted present interpretation of the Revolution and the making of the Constitution as conclude that his stand against distortion is a qualified one.

Continuing in the magazine article previously cited, he opposes attempts to glorify the United States by presenting legends in the guise of history:

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29. Albert Bushnell Hart, "Should American History Be Hero Worship?" Current History, 25 (March, 1927), p. 799.

No sensible person will dissent from protests against attempts to ratify legendary beliefs as to happenings in our early history. Betsy Ross and Penn Treaty Park and all that are not necessary for faith in free institutions. Nor does Jefferson's story of the silk stocking legs and the horseflies in the least disturb the historic fact that the Fourth of July was at the time, is and ever shall be the accepted birthday of the United States of America.<sup>30</sup>

Running through these statements, as the writer interprets them, is the belief that American institutions and their historical development will stand closer scrutiny than the ultra-nationalists think, that no suppression of facts or invention of fanciful stories is required to make certain that young people will come to love their country. Rather, Hart implies that without benefit of censorship and without manufactured legends, the accomplishments of our predecessors are sufficiently inspiring to promote devotion to country. Such phrases as ". . . their ultimate right to that decision was settled once for all at Boston and Saratoga and Trenton and Yorktown" and as ". . . the Fourth of July was at the time, is and ever shall be the accepted birthday of the United States of America," for example, have a ring to them which suggests that here indeed are stories to kindle the fires of patriotism in the hearts of all who read them.

Hart's conviction that it is important for patriotic sentiments to be preserved is illustrated by his frequent allusions to "debunkers" of various types and his disapproval of their writings which he feels may serve to undermine the feeling of pride in country. He makes the

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30. Ibid., p. 801.

following attack upon one group of writers, the biographers whose interpretations of the lives of our national heroes seem to him to be overly and unfairly critical:

Several biographies of George Washington are now on the market, the visible aim of which is to damage the reputation of a great man admired by his countrymen for nearly two hundred years for his noble spirit. One of these writers in his three volumes makes more than seven hundred derogatory statements about Washington, nearly all based on a malicious construction of facts that are perfectly in harmony with upright character and patriotic intention. The American people absorb biographies because they bring out human character and reveal human motives. Likewise, they love to see a pretender exposed; but besmirching the memory of a man who has been dead a hundred and thirty years ought not to be a source of income to an unhistorical writer.<sup>31</sup>

In another discussion, Hart makes an attack similar to the preceding one on the biographers who criticize America's heroes:

Biography is one of the most ancient and most effective forms of literature. The lives of great men are integral parts of the history of great nations. Hence, the effort to perpetuate those lives by biographies which, side by side with narrative history, carry the achievements of the past into the future of nations. . . . We Americans are justly proud of our great men and of the biographers who have set out to make later generations acquainted with the character and spirit of their ancestors. . . .

Alongside this group of masterful writers is a growing school of would-be biographers who seem to think that no history of any country is complete which does not bring to light the weaknesses, errors, and particularly the self-indulgences of those reputed to be great. Here in the United States the two greatest Americans have been made the target for suspicious innuendoes and downright falsehoods in the effort apparently to relieve the writers from the unwelcome admission of a cordial admiration for and love of the greatest figures in our history.<sup>32</sup>

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31. Albert Bushnell Hart, "The Writing of American History," Current History, 33 (March, 1931), p. 860.

32. Albert Bushnell Hart, "The Modern Historical School for Scandals," Current History, 31 (February, 1930), pp. 968-69.



Hart calls attention to another group of "debunkers" whom he sees as constituting a threat to a general spirit of national unity in America. These are the men and women who believe "that the pocket nerve is the most effective force in politics." He singles out Charles A. Beard as ringleader of the group and charges that in various works he has set out to prove that the United States government is founded on greed and deception:

From the study of public records, Beard has proved to his own satisfaction that when the state debts were assumed by the United States Government in 1790 most of the members of the Federal Convention, which gave Congress authority over such matters, were crooks, as were also many of the members of Congress who voted in favor of funding the bills. He proves that some of them sent out express riders to pick up blocks of securities at low figures and that a large number made money out of these transactions. Evidently Beard did not realize that he was attacking the confidence of the present American people in the whole social and governmental structure of the early United States.<sup>33</sup>

Writing a few years earlier, Hart talks of a new school of historians, headed by Beard, who make it their business to establish this thesis, if possible: "That the Constitution was made by rich men and for rich men and was secured against the interest and contrary to the wishes of a considerable majority of the people." And he claims that "many fallacies combine in this oft-repeated and expanded slur upon the Fathers of the Constitution, and in fact upon most of the men of education and public service then within the United States."<sup>34</sup>

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33. Albert Bushnell Hart, "The Writing of American History," Current History, Vol. 33 (March, 1931), p. 861.

34. Albert Bushnell Hart, "Should American History Be Hero Worship?" Current History, 25 (March, 1927) p. 801.

In his discussions of Beard's works, then, Hart clearly spells out his belief that the latter's interpretation of history is a distorted one and that such an interpretation can perpetuate fallacies and undermine the reader's faith in the United States.

Close examination of Hart's position on the subject of the study of history as it relates to enlightened patriotism, reveals a complex pattern. He attacks those ultra-nationalists who he thinks would have the writers of history leave out of their work any reporting and interpreting of events which might place our forefathers in anything but a favorable light. He looks upon the history they propose as distorted, and he seems to believe that Americans do not need distortion of the past to make them respect their ancestors.

On the other hand, writers whose interpretations of the characters and activities of national heroes like Washington and of the Founding Fathers tend to be sharply critical of their subjects meet with his disapproval. He takes the point of view that these interpretations are wrong, wicked, or both. And his choice of such emotionally charged phrasing, when he judges these writings, as "malicious construction of facts," "besmirching the memory," and "oft-repeated and expanded slur" suggests to the writer that he objects to these particular interpretations on not altogether objective grounds.

Regardless of the validity or lack of validity of his objections to critical treatments of our national heroes, Hart seems clearly to be implying that those historic interpretations of our great men and

events which lie between the non-critical advocated by the super-patriots and the very critical practiced by some modern historians are the interpretations which may effect enlightened patriotism.

Supporting history as a central subject of the curriculum, the members of the Committee of Seven offer the argument that historical method is similar to scientific method and "valuable in inculcating in the pupil a regard for accuracy and a reverence for truth."<sup>35</sup> They do not seem to consider reverence for truth and enlightened patriotism as incompatible goals in history classes, since they indicate the latter should also be an important aim: "Its [American history's] chief object should be to lead the pupil to a knowledge of the fundamentals of the state and society of which he is a part, to an appreciation of his duties as a citizen, and to an intelligent, tolerant patriotism."<sup>36</sup>

In summary, then, Hart believes students should learn what is true and how to judge the accuracy of material, thus implying that history teachers and textbook writers should select material to be presented on the basis of what is true. He seems to be convinced, too, that the study of history should promote enlightened patriotism, and he gives no indication of seeing the possibility of conflict between promoting intelligent loyalty to country and presenting an accurate version of past events.

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35. The Study of History in Schools, Report to the American Historical Association by the Committee of Seven, Andrew C. McLaughlin, Chairman, p. 32.

36. Ibid., p. 74.

The Committee of Seven also see history instruction legitimately and compatibly promoting both enlightened patriotism and regard for accuracy.

9. Should history be studied for its own sake as well as for the purpose of throwing light on the current scene?

Hart's commitment to the idea that history should be studied for the purpose of throwing light on the present scene has been illustrated earlier in this chapter.<sup>37</sup> The method of this study has revealed no independent comment by Hart on the matter of studying history for its own sake. In his role of member of the Committee of Seven, Hart presumably endorsed the statement:

While we believe that power and not information must be the chief end of all school work, we must not underestimate the value of a store of historical material. By the study of history the pupil acquires a knowledge of facts that is to him a source of pleasure and gratification in his after life.<sup>38</sup>

This statement is open to the interpretation--if we take studying history for its own sake to mean pursuing the subject simply for the pleasure it affords the student--that Hart and his colleagues meant to assert for the study of history intrinsic as well as instrumental values.

10. Should the preparation of teachers in the field of history consist principally of pedagogical training or of instruction in the subject field to be taught?

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37. Supra, p. 55 and 56.

38. The Study of History in Schools. Report to the American Historical Association by the Committee of Seven, Andrew C. McLaughlin, Chairman, p. 24.

Except as a member of the Committee of Seven, Hart has not dealt directly with this issue as formulated. He has clearly indicated that he thinks knowledge both of subject matter and of pedagogy are important to the effectiveness of history teachers, but he fails to touch upon the question of whether teacher preparation ought to feature mainly training in history or instruction in teaching techniques and skills. The Committee of Seven asserts, in effect, that history teachers ought to have both a thorough understanding of history and training in how to teach it, but that knowledge of subject matter is the more important of the two.

In a section on the preparation of teachers in Guide to the Study and Reading of American History, Hart quotes the 1893 Conference on History, Civic Government, and Political Economy to the effect that only teachers who have had adequate special training should be employed to teach these subjects. And he points out that such preparation is no longer difficult to get.<sup>39</sup> His inclusion of such a quotation within a discussion of teacher preparation suggests his approval of the idea of special preparation. But, whether special preparation means instruction in the subject to be taught or pedagogical training or both is not made clear.

Hart's own several detailed writings on the subject of how to teach history indicate that he should be classified among those who support the idea that pedagogical training is important for history teachers.

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39. Edward Channing, Albert Bushnell Hart, and Frederick Jackson Turner, Guide to the Study of Reading of American History, p. 23.

For example, in sections of Guide to the Study and Reading of American History, he deals with teaching techniques and methods to be employed at all school levels from elementary school to college. In this book he writes on such specific topics as oral and written reports, the source method, quizzes, class recitations, and ways of relating history to geography. Surely one who concerns himself with such specific aspects of method does not consider pedagogical training unnecessary. Other writings by this historian dealing with teaching methods and techniques are "How to Teach History in Secondary Schools" in Studies in American Education and "Methods of Teaching American History" in Methods of Teaching History which is edited by D. Stanley Hall.

Hart does not write off knowledge of subject matter as unimportant to history teachers. In a discussion of the teacher's daily class preparation, he makes it abundantly plain that he thinks command of subject matter is necessary for effective classroom performance: "He [the history teacher] should in his own reading have accumulated extracts and illustrations with which to enrich the lesson; he should know the textbook so well that he need not open it."<sup>40</sup>

The Committee of Seven, as the following statement indicates, would not neglect pedagogical training for teachers but would place greater emphasis upon subject matter preparation:

. . . . Every teacher should have had some instruction in methods of teaching, and should have learned from precept what are the essentials of historical study and historical thinking;

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40. Ibid., p. 23.

and what is of much greater importance--he should have so worked that he knows himself what historical facts are and how they are to be interpreted and arranged.<sup>41</sup>

In summary, Hart's own expressed views and his preparation of articles on teaching method indicate his belief in both pedagogical and subject matter training for prospective history teachers. However, he does not say which of these two kinds of preparation he would emphasize above the other. The Committee of Seven report, however, with which he concurs, calls for greater stress upon gaining knowledge of history than upon learning teaching methods.

11. Should the nature of the history curriculum in the schools be decided by specialists in the field of education, or should such decisions be made primarily by historians?

Neither Hart alone nor the Committee of Seven has dealt directly with the question of the relative competence of educators and historians to determine the history curriculum in the schools. Both Hart writing independently and the Committee have indicated confidence, however, in the ability of historians to devise history curricula. Hart shows his assurance by offering as suggestive for other schools the history curriculum devised by him for one school.<sup>42</sup> The Committee of Seven (made up of historians) reveals its belief in the ability of historians as curriculum makers by this statement of the purpose of its work:

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41. The Study of History in Schools. Report to the American Historical Association by the Committee of Seven, Andrew C. McLaughlin, Chairman, p. 117.

42. Supra, p. 45.

" . . . . To consider the subject of history in the secondary schools and to draw up a scheme of college entrance requirements in history.<sup>43</sup>

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43. The Study of History in Schools. Report to the American Historical Association by the Committee of Seven, Andrew C. McLaughlin, Chairman, p. V.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE VIEWS OF CARL LOTUS BECKER (1873-1945) ON ISSUES BEARING UPON THE TEACHING OF HISTORY

#### INTRODUCTION

The writer's examination of Carl Becker's works yielded ideas bearing upon ten of the eleven issues about which this study is organized. This historian's writings give no evidence of concern with the relative merits of introducing students to historical content through casual, unorganized contacts or through a systematic study of the subject.

Very little of Becker's writing deals explicitly with any of the issues. His discussions of such topics as the nature of history and the function of knowledge of history within the experience of students, however, have allowed the writer to draw and to verify certain inferences concerning his views on these controversies. He is most explicit on the issues concerning the training of history teachers, the relative merits of starting history students with a detailed study of a limited period or with a general survey of a considerable period, and the comparative effectiveness of retaining history as a separate subject in the schools and of incorporating history content into a combination social studies course focusing on the present scene.

Those of Becker's writings which have seemed to the writer to contain his ideas relevant to this study are as follows:

"Capitalizing History in the School," Education, 53 (December, 1932), pp. 199-201.

Everyman His Own Historian. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1935.

Freedom and Responsibility in the American Way of Life. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945.

The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth Century Philosophers. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1947.

Modern History, The Rise of a Democratic, Scientific, and Industrialized Civilization. New York: Silver Burdett Company, 1952.

Story of Civilization, with Frederic Duncalf. New York: Silver Burdett Company, 1944.

His general position, as inferred from these sources, on whether, how, why, to whom, and by whom history should be taught in the schools and on what should be taught, either under the title of "History" or as a substitute for it, may be summarized as follows:

#### Whether

1. He makes clear his conviction that knowledge of history content is appropriate for the students of the nation's schools, but he makes no comment on whether history should be required.

#### How

1. He is convinced that the study of history content should be thorough and detailed.

2. He is firmly committed to the view that the history content presented in the schools should be accurate.

#### Why

1. He makes the claim that knowledge of past events fosters the ability to deal with the present and anticipate the future more intelligently than would otherwise be possible.

#### To Whom

1. He suggests that knowledge of history content may appropriately be promoted for all American youth.

#### By Whom

1. He indicates that those who are to teach history should be thoroughly trained in the subject.

#### What

1. He advances the idea that a combination social-studies course in the schools which makes use of history as background and focuses on the current scene might possibly be a more effective means of promoting a clear understanding of the present and its controversies than are present history courses. His participation in the preparation of school history textbooks and his arguments for studying their contents, on the other hand, indicate a belief in the appropriateness of history courses in the schools which deal with both the American and world scene.

## THE ISSUES

1. Should American youth study American history only or should they study American history plus world or European history?

Becker's view on this issue seems to be that offering world or European history as well as American history is appropriate in the schools. Warrant for the inference that he thinks world or European history may have value as a school subject is his preparation of school history textbooks (both in independent effort and with the help of a co-author) dealing with the world scene. That he favors the study of both American and world history is indicated by his argument, advanced for studying these history textbooks, that an understanding of the present is increased as knowledge of a variety of places and times (presumably including remote and close ones) is gained.

He is among the several historians considered in this study who have authored history textbooks for the schools. One such textbook is Modern History, The Rise of a Democratic, Scientific, and Industrialized Civilization. Another, written with Frederic Duncalf, is Story of Civilization. The fact that Becker has written history textbooks for the schools dealing with the world and European scenes could perhaps be taken in itself as an indication he has thought history other than American history suitable for the schools. One need not be a cynic, however, to recognize that the decision to write a particular sort of textbook may often reflect a guess as to the potential market rather than a burning educational purpose.

In the preface of Modern History, Becker explains the value to students of taking a course that goes beyond the American scene. He argues that the more we remember of the past, the more intelligently we can deal with the present and anticipate the future and that such a book as Modern History may help to extend the memory of a student over the period of the past several hundred years, thus helping him in the task of handling the present and anticipating the future;<sup>1</sup>

. . . . Everyone has some knowledge of history, and it is quite essential that everyone should have, since it is only by remembering something of the past that we can anticipate something of the future. . . . The more we remember of things said and done (if they be the right things for our purpose), the better we can manage our affairs today, and the more intelligently we can prepare for what is coming to us tomorrow and next year and all our lives.

That is why it is worthwhile to take courses in history, or to read history books--even textbooks, even this book. The object should always be, not merely to learn enough to pass the examinations. . . .but to make an artificial extension of your personal memory. . . .

The purpose of this book is to help you make this artificial extension of memory, help you stretch your memory over the last four hundred years, so that recalling the events that have occurred during that past time, you can more intelligently anticipate what is likely to occur during the years that are to come.<sup>2</sup>

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1. This idea that knowledge of history extends the memory and allows more adequate handling of the present and the future is developed at length by Becker in a number of writings. It will be considered more fully in the discussion of his views on the question of retaining history as a separate subject in the school curriculum, pp. 96-108.
  2. Carl L. Becker, Modern History, The Rise of a Democratic, Scientific, and Industrialized Civilization. New York: Silver Burdett Company, 1952, pp. v-vi.

In the introduction of Story of Civilization, Becker, along with Frederic Duncalf, further supports the idea of the appropriateness of studying world or European history in the schools. These authors point out that the more extended the range of places and eras about which a young person has knowledge, the more intelligently he can form his beliefs and make his decisions and that the study of mankind's history enables students to enter the larger "time-and-space" world necessary to acquiring beliefs and making decisions on the basis of intelligence. The writer assumes that the wide-as-possible range of epochs and places, the knowledge of which these authors claim aids one in understanding the present clearly, would include America and its development. If this assumption is correct, then Becker has implied that American history is a suitable school subject:

The larger this time and space world in which he [the young person] can see himself in relation to people and events, the more intelligently he can decide what to think and what to do. . . .

From the time of the Sumerians (6000 years ago) to our own day, the human race has slowly and painfully extended the time and space world in which it could live and think. . . .

The ancient Greeks knew little of what happened before their day. . . . The Romans knew no more, Europeans in the Middle Ages even less. But since the sixteenth century the series of known past events has lengthened out, so that today we can form a picture of what has happened in the world during the last six thousand years, and even beyond that we know something of the strange half-human men who roamed the earth during five hundred thousand years before the first civilized men appeared.

Thus the human race, during six thousand years of harsh experience, has developed intelligence and understanding by

discovering the world in which it lives--the outer world of space, the backward world of time. . . .

It [the study of history] will enable you in some measure to appropriate the experience of mankind, to enter by means of an artificial memory, into the enlarged time and space world within which the present can be confronted and the future anticipated with greater intelligence and better understanding.<sup>3</sup>

In summary, Becker supports the view that the study of world or European history as well as American history is suitable in the schools on the following grounds: the greater the range of times and areas a young person has knowledge about, the more intelligently he can handle the present scene and anticipate the future; and the study of mankind's history provides the artificial memory which is a means of enlarging the time-and-space world of a student. His authorship of school textbooks dealing with the world scene gives further reason for the inference that he considers world or European history worth studying in the schools.

2. Should history be required rather than merely made available?

No explicit claim on Becker's part that history should be required in the schools was revealed by the method of this study. As a matter of fact, at one point in his writing dealing with offerings in the social science curriculum, he actually suggests that present history courses might be replaced by courses whose subject matter would be the chief countries of today's world and in which history content

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3. Carl L. Becker and Frederic Duncalf, Story of Civilization.  
New York: Silver Burdett Company, 1944.

would be used to furnish the "background" knowledge necessary to an understanding of the present scene.<sup>4</sup> In presenting this suggestion, Becker does not say that his proposed courses should or should not be required.

It is possible, of course, to argue from Becker's insistence that historical knowledge is essential to intelligent action<sup>5</sup> to the conclusion that he would surely require what he believes to be indispensable. But this argument ignores Becker's definition of "historical knowledge," which covers the child's own recollections or the tales told by his elders quite as explicitly as it covers the content of a textbook labeled "History":

We have to remember many things said and done in order to live our lives intelligently; and so far as we remember things said and done we have a knowledge of history, for that is what historical knowledge is--memory of things said and done. . . . Now if memory of some things said and done is necessary, it seems that memory of more things ought to be better. . . . That is why it is worthwhile to take courses in history, or to read history books--even textbooks, even this book.<sup>6</sup>

This passage is pretty clear as to just how far Becker would push the limits of "necessary historical knowledge," and gives no support for the view that he would include within it any systematic study of history as generally conceived. Such study is "worthwhile," and it

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4. Carl Becker, "Capitalizing History in the School," Education, 53 (December, 1932), p. 200. A more detailed coverage of this proposal of Becker's will be presented in the discussions of his views on the problems of what students should have history in their course of study, pp. 92-3, and of retaining history in the curriculum as a separate subject, pp. 95-7..

5. Supra, p. 88.

6. Carl Becker, Modern History, The Rise of a Democratic, Scientific, and Industrialized Civilization, pp. V-VI.



would be "better" to engage in it than not, but this is a long way from "necessary."

In summary of Becker's position on the issue under discussion, no more can be said than this: however suggestive his views on the function and importance of history content within the experience of students may be, his writings yield no actual assertion and no clearly warranted inference that Becker would require history in the schools.

3. Should the study of history be strongly urged for all students in the nation's schools or only for those who are expected to become "leaders"?

As his view on the issue of requiring history would indicate, Becker does not explicitly or directly urge the study of history for the potential leaders or for other students. He does find historical information useful for all students, and there is no suggestion that he makes any distinction between prospective "leaders" and others. His view that "historical knowledge" enables people to behave more intelligently suggests that he would want its benefits for all groups rather than for any selected group.

Becker does say that for most students, who will be neither scholars nor highly educated, present courses in history feature much useless information and carry more emphasis on former times than is likely to bring the most clear understanding of the current scene. Ideally, he feels that the amount and kind of historical information offered to each student should be based on his particular interests, capabilities, and future plans; but he indicates that this ideal

curricular arrangement is not feasible. He therefore proposes that the selection of history content be based on the requirements of the general run of students. All of this is perhaps compatible with the view that "leaders" need to know history more than do other people; but there is not the faintest suggestion that Becker thinks the school curriculum can or should be differentiated on this basis:

. . . . The best the teacher can do is to adapt his teaching to the knowledge, the interests, and the future activities of the general run of his pupils. Since the great majority of pupils in the schools will be neither scholars nor even highly educated persons, but just ordinary citizens pursuing every sort of business or profession, I am inclined to think that our present courses in history tend to burden their minds with much information which they can make little use of, and I therefore raise the question, but without wishing to answer it dogmatically, whether it would not be better to place less emphasis on the distant past and more on the immediate present.

I have sometimes thought of a course, or courses, carefully co-ordinated, which would include all that the schools now offer in history, government, economics, and the like--in short, all that is now offered in the social sciences. The aim of such a course would be to give the pupil a useful knowledge of the world in which he lives.<sup>7</sup>

Becker clearly feels, then, that under conditions possible to the schools the instruction of students in social studies has to be geared to the interests and plans of the general run of students. And he plainly implies, classroom work being as it is, that the work in social studies offered to all students should place less emphasis on the distant past than do present courses in history (which burden the minds

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7. Carl Becker, "Capitalizing History in the School," Education, 53 (December, 1932), pp. 199-200.

of the general run of students with much useless information).

A further implication of Becker's writing quoted above is that the social studies course or courses should use history content primarily as background for understanding the present scene.

Under ideal conditions, which would render knowledge of history most useful to each student, Becker would urge instruction by the history teacher on a strictly individual basis. The instruction of each student under such an arrangement would be based upon his interests, knowledge, and plans. Given these ideal school conditions (which he admits are not presently attainable) his position suggests that young people in the schools with interest in and knowledge of history and with future plans involving historical scholarship might well be urged to study history as a separate subject on a specialized basis. Becker's detailing of the ideal conditions upon which this supposition is grounded follows:

For any particular person a useful knowledge of history consists of that pattern of artificial memories of past times and distant places which he has habitually at command to enrich his present perceptions. Such knowledge. . . enables him to anticipate the future better, to see it in longer perspective, and so to orient himself more effectively in the world in which he lives. If this is so, the teaching of history in the schools, to be best worthwhile, should be based on what the pupils already know and are likely to know and be doing later.

Now, of course, pupils in schools are not all alike in this; and the ideal teaching of history to them would be strictly individual. What each pupil should be taught would in that case depend on his present interests, his present knowledge and on what he expected to do in the world. This kind of teaching is, unfortunately, not possible. . . .<sup>8</sup>

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8. Ibid., p. 199.

In outline, Becker's position on the issue of urging the study of history for potential leaders or for all students runs something like this: he makes no explicit plea that history be studied in the schools by either the general run of students or the superior ones who presumably are the potential leaders, yet he considers historical content useful to all students as background information in courses which focus on understanding the present scene. His writing suggests that under the ideal instructional arrangement, in which the work of the student would be on an individual basis and built upon his interests, knowledge, and future plans, Becker would urge capable students (a term which one might, if he chose, equate with "potential leaders") to study history more or less intensively, if their interests so inclined them.

4. Should history be maintained in the school curriculum as an organized discipline or should its content merely be employed in contributing to the understanding of social problems being studied under some other curricular arrangement?

At one point in his writing, as the discussions on the matters of requiring history and of urging history for all students have indicated, Becker has said that history courses in the schools as presently constituted burden the minds of the general run of students with useless information and has expressed the belief that students might find more useful a course or series of courses combining present social studies offerings. Such a proposed course would focus on promoting understanding of the present and would make use of history content merely for

background information. This is not to say that Becker considers history content of minor importance in education; his numerous references to what knowledge of history can do within the experience of students point up his conviction of its unique contribution to one's understanding. In some of his writings, as a matter of fact, he defends the study of history in terms that might be interpreted as a plea for retaining the subject as a separate course in the curriculum. However, no such explicit plea is made. Moreover, his arguments as to the value of "history" turn out on analysis to deal with what knowledge of history can do within the experience of students rather than with the relative merits of various curricular arrangements which might involve history content.

Reference has been made earlier to Becker's assertions that present courses in history tend to burden the minds of a large proportion of students with information they are unable to use and that a social studies course using history content merely as background explanation of the present might possibly be effective. His elaboration of the organization and purposes of such a course follows:

I have sometimes thought of a course, or courses carefully co-ordinated, which would include all that the schools now offer in history, government, economics, and the like--in short, all that is now offered in the social sciences. The aim of such a course or courses would be to give the pupil[s] a useful knowledge of the world in which he lives. They would deal with the chief countries of the world as they are today. The pupils would learn something about the geography of each country, something of its present form of government, its political parties and party issues, its economic resources and industrial activities, its social conditions, customs, its literature and its scholarly and scientific contributions. . . . In such a

course the pupil would not study history as a separate course; he would study history when, and in so far as, he needed a knowledge of past events in order to understand the present situation in any country. He would learn enough about the "past"<sup>9</sup> to understand the present civilized world in which he lives.

Becker supports the idea, then, that social studies courses with emphasis on the present scene, using history content only to illuminate current topics, may be an effective way of helping students to gain a useful knowledge of the world in which they live.

Despite the interest he has expressed in this somewhat unorthodox curricular arrangement, Becker is by no means convinced that knowledge of historical content plays a minor role in the education of students. Much of his theoretical writing, as a matter of fact, deals with what a knowledge of content may be expected to do within the experience of one who acquires it. For example, the following proposition is implied in various of his writings on the usefulness of acquaintance with history content: a knowledge of history is a useful and necessary tool to anyone engaged in the process of trying to foresee possible outcomes of any action proposed to bring about fulfillment of purposes or solutions of current problems, personal or social.

Becker implies belief in this proposition in his Heavenly City of the Eighteenth Century Philosophers when he makes the following claims: Bringing into consciousness recollections of past events is necessary during times of purposeful activity to "orient us in our endeavors";

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9. Ibid., p. 200.

being oriented involves being prepared for what may come into our experience which in turn involves the necessity of recalling past events and anticipating the future; remembering the past and anticipating the future are linked together in our consciousness; and the quality of our anticipations depends upon that of our memories.

Becker presents the preceding argument in these terms:

. . . . The educated man may, whenever he wishes, bring into consciousness a general image (sketchy and incorrect though it may be) of the long past of mankind and hold it there, making it for the time being a part of his "present."

The normal and sensible man does not often drag the whole past of mankind into the present. But at any moment of deliberate and purposeful activity each one of us brings into present consciousness a certain part of the past, such actual or artificial memories of past events as may be necessary to orient us in our little world of endeavor. To be oriented we must be prepared for what is coming to us, and to be prepared for what is coming to us it is necessary not only to recall certain past events but to anticipate (note I do not say "predict") the future. . . . If our memories of past events are short and barren, our anticipations of future events will be short and barren; if our memories are rich and diversified, our anticipations of what is to come are likely to be more or less so, too. But the main point is that the character of the pattern of the one, no less than its richness and extent, will depend on the character of the other.<sup>10</sup>

He further supports the idea that knowledge of history is helpful in fulfilling purposes and solving problems in "Everyman His Own Historian" when he says that memory of past events, along with anticipation of future ones, enlarges the present moment so that current activity may be judged as it relates to purposes:

Memory of things said and done (whether in our immediate yesterdays or in the long past of mankind), running hand in

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10. Carl L. Becker, The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth Century Philosophers. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1947, pp. 120-21.

hand with the anticipation of things to be said and done, enables us, each to the extent of his knowledge and imagination to be intelligent, to push back the narrow confines of the fleeting present moment so that what we are doing may be judged in the light of what we hope to do.<sup>11</sup>

The two statements quoted above do not specify just how knowledge of history helps in solving present problems and in fulfilling purposes. The example Becker develops in his presidential address to the American Historical Association, which portrays "Mr. Everyman," the layman, as an historian, illustrates the way knowledge of history may promote the solution of present problems or the fulfillment of purposes. The illustration assigns "Mr. Everyman" a personal problem--one of paying his coal bill. In the course of solving the problem he uses knowledge of "things said and done in the past."

One morning Mr. Everyman consults his memorandum book and sees a reminder to himself to pay the coal bill owed to Mr. Smith. Instantaneously a series of historical events come to life in Mr. Everyman's mind. He sees an image of himself ordering twenty tons of coal from Smith last summer and of Smith's wagons driving up to his house and delivering the coal. The mental picture Mr. Everyman forms of Smith's wagon delivering the coal is a picture of things said and done in the past, but it is associated with a picture of things to be said and done in the future; therefore, throughout the day Mr. Smith visualizes both the coal wagons that had delivered the coal in the past and himself

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11. Carl L. Becker, Everyman His Own Historian. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1935, p. 242.



going at four o'clock (in the future) to Smith's to pay his bill. On arriving to pay the bill, Mr. Everyman is informed by Smith, who has consulted his records, that although the coal had been ordered from him (Smith), because of his not having the right kind of coal, he had turned over the order to Brown, who did have the right kind. Brown, then, had delivered the coal, and so Mr. Everyman owes him. He goes to Brown's to pay and Brown's record shows that he has come to the right place. Later at home he finds a bill that had been sent from Brown. The location of this bill gives him access to another historical document which supports his action.<sup>12</sup>

Becker analyzes Mr. Everyman's operations, showing that in solving his problem of paying the bill he first tried to recall things said and done and that his unaided memory proved inadequate. Then, Becker explains, he, Mr. Everyman, had to examine certain documents in order to discover the necessary but as yet unknown facts. The documents were found to give conflicting reports, so that a critical comparison of the sources had to be undertaken to eliminate error. All this allowed Mr. Everyman to picture a selected series of historical events and to take intelligent action on the basis of this picture.<sup>13</sup>

While the preceding example does show the function served by knowledge of history of a sort in solving a current personal problem, its effective illustration of Becker's position, the writer believes,

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12. Ibid., pp. 237-9.

13. Ibid., p. 239.

suffers from the fact that its subject matter is not within the field of history as that subject is usually defined. It is, of course, conceivable that Becker, having defined "historical knowledge" to include one's private memories or the content of various account-books, is basing his claim for the utility of "history" solely upon the obvious usefulness of this one component. The writer prefers to believe that he intended to suggest a similar utility for the "artificial memories" that are more conventionally regarded as "history." To clarify further Becker's proposition, then, the writer submits an explanatory illustration which takes for its subject matter a generally-recognized and recurring social issue, the effective handling of which calls for knowledge of "history-book" history.

Imagine "Mr. Independent Voter" trying to decide which of two candidates to vote for in a presidential election. In the course of his deliberation, he is constantly reminded by writers in the press and by his friends that "electing a military man may very well have the outcome of pushing our country into a war, because military men think in terms of warlike tactics." Mr. Independent Voter definitely does not want his country to become involved in war. As he tries to make up his mind whether or not a president with a background of military training might be expected in the conduct of foreign relations to resort quickly to guns in time of stress, Mr. Independent Voter decides that the only way he can be sure is to watch Mr. Military Candidate conducting the nation's foreign affairs as president.

Obviously, Mr. Independent Voter cannot do that before the voters go to the polls. He concludes that he can only make an intelligent guess and that one way he can do that is by recalling whether or not this country's military presidents have tended to behave as the generalization suggests. He is reasonably well equipped to recall the events necessary because he always liked American history in school and remembers what he calls "a lot of the main things that have happened."

He starts trying to remember who the country's military presidents have been and something about them. George Washington, he recalls, did not take the nation into war. Why, Washington even indicated the importance of staying out of other countries' affairs when he said something about "no entangling alliances." And, as for Andy Jackson, his administration went by without war, too. So did Teddy Roosevelt's, but Mr. Independent Voter remembers Teddy's actions in the Caribbean and wonders if he (Teddy) weren't lucky that nobody was in a position to or cared to challenge him. Perhaps he remembers also that Teddy's military career was much shorter in duration than the fame it brought him, and that he probably ought not to be classified as a "military man."

This thought leads Mr. Independent Voter to a consideration of some of the wars the country has had and the presidents' roles in them. His mind jumps to Lincoln and the Civil War. He recalls the long years of sectional conflict over tariffs, territories, slaves, and the like

which preceded Lincoln's presidency, and although he notes the difference between Lincoln's forcefulness and Buchanan's inaction, he wonders if "conditions of the times" don't have more to do with what a president does in relation to war than his being or not being a military man. Then he remembers that Madison, Lincoln, McKinley, Wilson, and Franklin Roosevelt, the country's wartime presidents, were all "civilian" presidents. He concludes that, whatever the decisive factors that have plunged the nation into wars, having a president who has been trained as a soldier has not been one of them. He then decides, as he continues his efforts to make up his mind about which of the two candidates to vote for in the presidential election, that, as far as he is concerned, the military training has little bearing on the issue; that, so far as he can tell, voting for the military man would be no more likely to lead to war than the alternative choice.

Mr. Independent Voter has used his knowledge of history (about wars and presidents) in a somewhat unsystematic but on the whole quite satisfactory way, to help him see the possible outcome (war or peace) of a proposed action (helping to elect a military man to the presidency) in solving his individual part of a current problem (voting for a "good" man for president who, it may be hoped, among other things, will refrain from precipitating a needless war).

Becker's idea, presented and illustrated in the preceding pages, that knowledge of history promotes the solution of current problems and the fulfillment of purposes does not in itself constitute an argument either for including history as a separate subject in the

school curriculum or for substituting in its place a social studies course with emphasis on the present. The idea does indicate a belief by Becker that gaining a workable knowledge of history content is important in a student's education, and it therefore suggests a conviction that the process of using history as "background" information in a course focusing on the present scene would not for him involve any such relegation of historical content to a trifling or perfunctory role as has characterized most actual courses which have purported to do what he proposes.

A further idea of Becker's which points up his belief in the importance of knowledge of history content is the one implied in some of his writings that such knowledge provides necessary tools in the formulation of generalizations which in turn aids the student in achieving effective orientation to the world.

In a passage in Freedom and Responsibility, Becker implies that a knowledge of history makes possible a process of generalization which promotes effective adjustment to the social world. According to Becker's argument, history is, among other things, a story of an unending procession of generations of men rather like us of the modern world who had somewhat comparable motives. No matter how far modern man delves into the past, he meets with no complete strangers. Becker says,

But the accumulated store of learning at the command of modern man enables him to fill in the outer void of nature and history with more things and more familiar things--with stars and atoms of measurable mass and movement; with an endless succession of generations of men like himself,

inspired with like motives, who brought to pass a series of related and credible events from remote times to the present. The ideally extended environment of the modern man is thus of the same texture as that of his immediate experience. Within this extended environment he can therefore move freely and without apprehension, so that however far he may wander in the outer void of nature or times past, he finds himself at home because he meets with no alien men or strange, inexplicable events.<sup>14</sup>

Few would deny that in order to have these "men like us" become a part of his "extended environment", modern man would have to go through a process of generalization. In what other way could he come to recognize such common traits as his forebears share with him, and how else could he see these people of past generations as kindred spirits? The following example, which illustrates the process of recognizing those traits common to ourselves and to our forebears or "those from distant places" should further clarify what the writer takes to be Becker's implication concerning the generalizing function of knowledge of history.

Suppose a student has recently been studying about both the American and the French Revolutions. He has learned that in both cases two people who rebelled tolerated what they considered injustices at the hands of those in authority for a long time before taking strong action. Suppose, too, that this same student later has read in the newspaper about mobs in East Berlin rioting in the face of what they considered unfair regulations by the Communist authorities in such

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14. Carl L. Becker, Freedom and Responsibility in the American Way of Life. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945, p. 49.

matters as conditions of employment. The student could conceivably say to himself, "That situation in East Berlin may be a lot like things in France and America before their revolutions. In all these cases, the people got tired of having their rights trampled on. I believe that people just about anywhere might try to rise up and fight in some way if pushed long enough and hard enough by their bosses. The people in this country certainly would. If what I hear is true about all the control of the radio and newspapers in Russia and about how the big-wigs in the party handle elections and food distribution so that most of the people don't have any say-so, I wonder if the government hadn't better change its ways or watch out."

The student has gone through a rough process of generalization. He has noted traits and events common to people of the past and to those living today and has explained to his own satisfaction a larger part of his world than he had before.

The idea which the writer has called implicit in Becker's writing--that knowledge of history allows students to generalize--does not constitute an argument either for or against retaining history as a separate subject. It simply attests to his belief that knowledge of history is far from useless information.

In the introductions of the school textbooks, Modern History and Story of Civilization, Becker's justification of the study of history could be interpreted as a plea for retaining history as a separate subject in the schools. In the preface to Story of Civilization, it is argued by Becker and co-author Duncalf that the study of history

allows the student to appropriate easily the hard-won experience of the race, thus equipping himself to handle present problems and anticipate the future effectively:

. . . . When you study history you are acquiring an artificial memory of what happened in times past and in distant places. You are enlarging the time and space world in which you live and think.

In doing this you are doing easily and in a short time what the human race was able to do only with much difficulty and in a very long time indeed. The earliest men were like new-born children. They knew nothing about any country beyond the region in which they lived, nothing about any past events in which they had not taken part. They. . . saw things as "close-ups," in short perspective, unrelated to anything in distant places or in past times. . . . Since the sixteenth century the series of known past events has lengthened out, so that today we can form a picture of what has happened in the world during the last six thousand years, and even beyond that we know something of the strange half-human men who roamed the earth five hundred thousand years before the first civilized men appeared.

Thus the human race, during six thousand years of harsh experience, has developed intelligence and understanding by discovering the world in which it lives--the outer world of space, the backward world of time. . . . Since the sixteenth century the series of known past events has lengthened out, so that today we can form a picture of what has happened in the world during the last six thousand years, and even beyond that we know something of the strange half-human men who roamed the earth five hundred thousand years before the first civilized men appeared.

Thus the human race, during six thousand years of harsh experience, has developed intelligence and understanding by discovering the world in which it lives--the outer world of space, the backward world of time. . . . [The study of history] will enable you in some measure to appropriate the experience of mankind, to enter, by means of an artificial memory, into the enlarged time and space world within which the present can be confronted and the future anticipated with greater intelligence and better understanding.<sup>15</sup>

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15. Carl L. Becker, Story of Civilization, pp. vi-viii.



The position outlined above clearly points up reasons for studying history. The writer sees nothing in the argument, however, which would preclude the study of history as background information related to aspects of the current scene. Presumably, for example, some of the experience of the race could be appropriated in a study of the current operations of the United States Government which involved such background information as the way the presidential electoral system has worked through the years. It is clear from his various statements on the educational function of history that Becker considers knowledge of history important mainly as it allows the student to deal intelligently with the present scene. And, he has speculated about a combination social studies course (using knowledge of history as "background") as an effective means of helping students understand the current scene. The writer, therefore, cannot conclude that Becker would insist upon retaining history as a separate subject in the school curriculum.

In summary, Becker's position on the issue of retaining history as a separate subject in the curriculum seems to be this:

1. Knowledge of historical content has important usefulness in helping students to solve present social problems and to anticipate the future intelligently; and,
2. A combination social studies course, focusing on the present scene and making use of historical content as background might prove effective in helping students deal with the present and anticipate the future intelligently.

5. Are controversial issues best understood by pursuing a chronological study of history which reveals their past forms clearly and to some extent outlines their present forms; or are they best understood by a direct consideration of the current aspects of the issues with historical background brought in only when it is clearly necessary for understanding?

No direct statement by Becker on this issue was revealed by the method of this study. His proposal of a combination social studies course, which could possibly promote a better understanding of the present world than school history courses do, might be interpreted as indicating a belief on his part that controversial issues as well as other aspects of the present scene could be profitably considered within a context which focuses mainly on the present. This is not to say that he suggests controversial issues may be thoroughly understood without knowledge of their historical background. His view that knowledge of history is useful in promoting the solution of current problems and the fulfillment of purposes can reasonably be applied to controversial issues, since "present problems or purposes" may often take the form of controversial issues. The writer's earlier description of Mr. Independent Voter's attempt to vote intelligently<sup>16</sup> involves such an issue and illustrates the usefulness of historical knowledge in promoting understanding.

Within the method of this study, then, Becker has not explicitly taken a stand on the issue under consideration. Some of his writings permit an inference which places him on one side of the question; others furnish equal warrant for putting him on the other side.

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16. Supra, pp. 101-4.

6. Is history most effectively learned by starting with a detailed study of a limited period or area or by beginning with a general survey of a broad area or time span?

Becker professes to believe that history is more effectively learned by a detailed study of selected men and events than by a general survey. The writing which most closely suggests that Becker holds this belief refers to what is probably a first course in modern Western history. It does not make clear, however, whether he would insist on detailed accounts of men and events mainly for beginners or whether he would apply the belief generally. Inasmuch as the belief is set forth in an introduction to a textbook covering the last four hundred years in the European world, it cannot reasonably be claimed that Becker would insist upon the beginner's confining himself to a limited time span and space area!

In the preface of his school textbook, Modern History, which covers European history during the last four hundred years, Becker defends the detailed study of selected men and events on the ground that full explanations or descriptions may make these people and happenings seem "real and interesting."

Of all the things said and done in the last four hundred years, only a very few of the most important ones could possibly be mentioned in a single volume like this one. If I had tried to say something about all the events, in all the countries, the book would have been no more than a bare list of names and dates. I thought it would be much better to omit a great many events and even to say very little or nothing about some countries, so that there would be space enough to describe with some fullness of detail the events and people I did describe. By telling a good deal about a few events and a few people it would be possible, I thought, to make them seem real and perhaps even interesting. I have

therefore selected those events and people which it seemed to me would best serve to explain how the European world of today came to be what it is.<sup>17</sup>

The writer assumes that Becker would have these events and people become real and interesting for students on the well-established premise that only what seems real or interesting can be understood.

The time span and space area referred to above by Becker are broad. This fact could suggest that he at least has no objection to the practice of offering general history courses to high school students, so long as content is selected so that the accounts of the men and events covered be detailed. Indeed, there is a sense in which Becker seems to assert that, while his book purports to survey four centuries in many lands, it actually does nothing of the sort. His preparation of an alleged general history for school use could possibly be explained by insistence on a book of such purported scope by publishers and editors and by those in the schools who select textbooks.

In any case, it may be said in summary that Becker clearly advocates full and detailed treatment of men and events for young history students on the ground that such accounts bring these people and happenings to life and perhaps create interest.

7. Should young students become familiar with the content of history through casual and unorganized experiences before attempting a systematic study of history?

The method of this study yielded no comment by Becker on this issue.

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17. Carl L. Becker, Modern History, p. vi.

8. Should the history teacher or the writer of history textbooks rigorously confine himself to material he has found to be true, or should he sometime depart from this principle for the purpose of strengthening the loyalty of people to their country or of unifying them?

What the historians find to be true, Becker believes, is inevitably conditioned by the spirit of the times in which they live. Nevertheless, he takes the position that historians are obligated to make their work as accurate as they know how. He sees the function of the historian as that of providing for others the most faithful interpretation of past events human frailty allows. Surely, then, it could be assumed, in the absence of any assertion by Becker to the contrary, that he would have history textbook writers and teachers present as accurate a version of past events as possible. And his statement at one point in his writing that the main task of high school teachers is to furnish students with factual information--not ready-made theories--would seem to warrant a firm conclusion that history for Becker must tell what is true rather than simply underwrite preferred attitudes.

Becker makes clear his awareness of the limiting factors involved in the historian's quest for truth in his presidential address to the American Historical Association. He points out that historical facts cannot speak for themselves, that written history is necessarily an interpretation of these facts by men. And he asserts that the historian's interpretation is inevitably influenced by his own circumstances, purposes, and preconceptions and by the spirit of the times in which he lives:

Even the most disinterested historian has at least one preconception, which is the fixed idea that he has none. . . . Left to themselves, the facts cannot speak; left to themselves, they do not exist, not really, since for all practical purposes there is no fact until some one affirms it. The least the historian can do with any historical fact is to select and affirm it. To select and affirm even the simplest complex of facts is to give them a certain place in a certain pattern of ideas, and this alone is enough to give them a special meaning. . . .

It is. . . . not the indiscriminated fact, but the perceiving mind of the historian that speaks; the special meaning which the facts are made to convey emerges from the substance-form which the historian employs to recreate imaginatively a series of events not present to perception.

In constructing this substance form of vanished events, the historian. . . . will be conditioned by the specious present in which alone he can be aware of his world. Being neither omniscient nor omnipresent, the historian is not the same person always and everywhere; and for him. . . . the form and significance of remembered events. . . . will vary with the time and place of the observer.<sup>18</sup>

In the same address, Becker expresses his belief that it is the historian's primary responsibility to make his work accurate and to be as honest as he can in his interpretations. Speaking of the development of the historian's craft, he points out that the first duty of the practitioner is to be sure of his facts: "With the use of written records, history, gradually differentiated from fiction, is understood as the story of events that actually occurred; and with the increase and refinement of knowledge, the historian recognizes that his first duty is to be sure of his facts, let their meaning be what it may."<sup>19</sup>

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18. Carl L. Becker, Everyman His Own Historian, pp. 250-2.

19. Ibid., p. 248.

Indicating that the important function of historians is to furnish interpretations of past events which will be generally useful, he points out once more the necessity for craftsmen to be accurate as well as honest: "Our proper function is not to repeat the past but to make use of it, to correct and rationalize for common use Mr. Everyman's mythological adaptation of what actually happened. We are surely under bond to be as honest and as intelligent as human frailty permits."<sup>20</sup>

Becker's idea that the historian's work (which is to meet the requirement of honesty and accuracy) should be for common use implies, the writer believes, that he would not exclude students in the schools from the group for whom history ought to be accurate. And if it had seemed to him for some reason that history textbook writers and teachers should pay less attention than the historians to truth and honesty in their work, we may reasonably assume that he would have felt constrained to say so and to explain why.

At one point in his writing which deals mainly with the problem of whether high school teaching should emphasize the presentation of theories or facts, he reveals in direct statement his belief that presenting "solid factual information" to students is the primary job of high school teachers:

It must be remembered that high-school students are adolescents, and it is at least reasonable to maintain that the chief task of high school teachers is to furnish the immature minds of their pupils with solid factual information. . . .

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20. Ibid., p. 253.

[There is not] much point in discussing with high-school students the meaning and significance of American history if they do not first know, for example, that California was not one of the original thirteen states, or that Washington did not deliver the Gettysburg address, or that the Gettysburg address was not a street number in Gettysburg where Lincoln once lived.<sup>21</sup>

Although he does not deal here with the matter of teaching for the purpose of promoting national unity, his designation of the presentation of facts as the first task of teachers (including history teachers) suggests that he would not want "loyalty" promoted in the schools at the expense of fact.

To summarize Becker's position on the issue under discussion, it may be said he sees the function of the historian as one of providing for others the most accurate picture of past events possible for human beings. This view of the role of the historian suggests, in the absence of any assertion that the history content selected for use in teaching high school students should be of a different order from the kind prepared by the historian, that he would have history textbook writers and teachers present as accurate a version of the past as they can. His claim that the principal job of high school teachers is to furnish students with factual information gives further support to the assumption that he would not promote patriotism by sacrificing the truth.

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21. Carl L. Becker, Freedom and Responsibility in the American Way of Life, pp. 53-4.



9. Should history be studied for its own sake as well as for the purpose of throwing light upon the present scene?

Becker's conviction that history should be studied to throw light on the present has already been amply illustrated. As a matter of fact, some of his writings suggest the possible belief on his part that getting to understand the present is the only justification for gaining knowledge of history content. The method of this study has yielded no indication that Becker would have history studied for its own sake. On the other hand, he makes no direct claim that history as a separate subject should not be studied for its own sake in the schools.

Despite the absence of an explicit statement on the point, his idea of the function of history is suggestive that he would not have history studied for its own sake as a general practice. He says the natural task of history is that of enabling the student to judge his present activities more intelligently as a result of his knowledge of man's past experiences:

This is the natural function of history, of history reduced to its lowest terms, of history conceived as the memory of things said and done; memory of things said and done (whether in our immediate yesterdays or in the long past of mankind), running hand in hand with the anticipation of things to be said and done, enables us, each to the extent of his knowledge and imagination, to be intelligent, to push back the narrow confines of the fleeting present moment so that what we are doing may be judged in the light of what we have done and what we hope to do.<sup>22</sup>

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22. Carl L. Becker, Everyman His Own Historian, p. 242.

This conception of the natural function of history plus Becker's failure to mention values of studying history apart from some connection with the present scene lends support to the conclusion that he would not likely recommend offering the study of history in schools on the ground that the subject should be studied for its own sake.

In summary, Becker's view seems to be this: the study of history throws light on the present scene, and this illumination is the natural function of history. The writer's examination of the historian's writing yielded neither an assertion nor a strong implication that history should be studied for its own sake. Presumably, as a humane and liberal spirit, Becker would have no objection to the study of history by anyone who enjoys it, for its own sake, or for his own sake, or to pass the time while waiting for a bus. But, it is pretty clear that its relevance to the present is what, for Becker, makes history more worth offering as a school subject than, say, ballroom dancing or chess.

10. Should the preparation of teachers in the field of history consist principally of pedagogical training or of instruction in the subject field to be taught?

Training in methodology for any but the least able teachers, in Becker's view, is largely a waste of time. Learning thoroughly the subject matter he is to teach and working out his own methods and procedures constitute effective preparation for the teacher so far as methodology is concerned, according to Becker. He expresses no opinion

on whether other aspects of pedagogy such as educational philosophy and theory should be a part of the teacher's preparation.

In "Capitalizing History in the School," he outlines the view summarized above. He says that the emphasis on method which he finds prevalent is of little use except to inferior teachers, that training in subject matter is sufficient instruction in "method" for "real" teachers, and that real teachers with knowledge of their subject matter can best work out their own classroom methods:

I have always thought that the great emphasis which is now placed on "methods" of teaching is of use only, or chiefly, to teachers who are not much good. . . . and for real teachers all that needs to be said about method was once said succinctly by Professor Nichols of Cornell University. Asked what was the best method of teaching Physics, he is said to have replied: "I can tell you the best method of teaching Physics in six words: 'Know Physics'--and repeat the words twice."

What I am getting at is that there is, for the teaching of any subject, no best method for all teachers. A teacher who knows enough of his subject to be permitted to teach it, and is sufficiently intelligent to be permitted to teach at all, is quite capable, and is alone capable, of working out for himself the method that is best adapted to his own type of mind, to his subject, and to the pupils he has to teach. . . .<sup>23</sup>

Thus, Becker would place emphasis on training in subject matter for teachers (including history teachers), and he would have each teacher work out his own methods to fit his particular situation and qualifications.

Nothing said above should give aid or comfort to those who are contemptuous of "professional education" in general. There is no

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23. Carl L. Becker, "Capitalizing History in the School," Education, 53 (December, 1932), p. 200.

reason to suppose that Becker would deprecate the study, say, of educational psychology, or of child growth and development. His strictures are exclusively against courses in methods of teaching a particular subject.

11. Should the nature of the history curriculum in the schools be decided by specialists in the field of education, or should such decisions be made primarily by historians?

Becker's own speculations about a combination social studies course to be offered in the schools which might help students understand the present scene<sup>24</sup> suggest that he has not considered historians completely unequipped to theorize about the school curriculum. Except for this implication, however, the method of this study yielded no information on Becker's view concerning this issue.

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24. Supra, p. 95-6.

## CHAPTER V

### THE VIEWS OF CHARLES AUSTIN BEARD (1874-1948) ON ISSUES BEARING UPON THE TEACHING OF HISTORY

#### INTRODUCTION

Charles Austin Beard has expressed views bearing upon virtually all of the issues around which this study is organized. One of the two issues upon which his writing, under the method of the study, has revealed no opinion at all is that concerning the relative merits for beginners of studying in detail a limited period of history and of running over a general survey of a broad area or time span. The other subject upon which he has made no direct comment is whether history should be required in the schools.

Those of Beard's writings which have seemed to the writer to contain his ideas relevant to this inquiry are as follows:

A Charter for the Social Sciences, for the Commission on the Social Studies of the American Historical Association. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932.

The Development of Modern Europe, Volume 1, with James Harvey Robinson. Boston: Ginn and Company, 1907.

A First Book in American History, with William C. Bagley. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1943.

A History of the American People, with William C. Bagley. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1943.

The Making of American Civilization, with Mary Beard. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1937.

"Memorandum from an Old Worker in the Vineyard," Social Education, Volume 2 (September, 1938), pp. 383-85.

The Nature of the Social Sciences, for the Commission on Social Studies of the American Historical Association. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934.

Our Old World Background, with William C. Bagley. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1922.

"Why Did We Go to War?" The New Republic, Volume 90 (March 10, 1937), pp. 127-29.

Beard's general position, as inferred from these writings, on whether, how, why, to whom, and by whom history should be taught in the schools and on what should be taught under the title of "History" or as a substitute for it may be outlined as follows:

#### Whether

1. He presents several arguments in defense of the study of both American and other history. No direct claim is made by him, however, that history should be required in the schools.

#### How

1. He says that history as a separate, logically developed subject should be maintained in the school curriculum.
2. He suggests, in the interest especially of citizenship training for students who will not continue in school, a beginning experience with logically organized content at the intermediate grade level.
3. He holds that history teachers and textbook writers have an

obligation to give students accurate information.<sup>1</sup>

### Why

1. He offers these reasons for studying history:

- a) it promotes insight into the present scene;
- b) it fosters a strong sense of social change, an attitude which contributes to understanding of the contemporary world;
- c) it helps bring realization of the responsibilities involved in being citizens of one of the world's leading countries;
- d) it provides contact with the great minds of the ages and thus substantially promotes the liberal education of students;
- e) it cultivates the qualities and skills necessary for dealing with controversial issues; and,
- f) it promotes enlightened patriotism.

### To Whom

1. He implies that some study of history is important for all students as a part of civic training, and he says that the extensive study of history is necessary for potential leaders if they are to gain sufficient insight into the present scene.

### By Whom

1. He indicates that those who are to teach history should be well grounded in the social sciences and should be familiar with contemporary thought about the nature of the social sciences.

### What

1. He holds that social scientists are qualified to try to work out for use in the schools programs in the social studies.

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1. As will appear later, Beard also claims that enlightened patriotism is a desirable outcome of social studies instruction. He finds no incompatibility between this aim and that of helping students get accurate information.

## THE ISSUES

1. Should American youth study American history only or should they study American history plus world or European history?

Beard supports the study of history other than that of America on the ground that such study helps American students understand their own country better, gives insight into the present scene and its general tendencies, and helps students to realize the responsibilities involved in being citizens of one of the world's most influential nations.

Beard's collaboration on school history textbooks with other authors, with Mary Beard, for example, on The Making of American Civilization, with James Harvey Robinson on The Development of Modern Europe, and with William C. Bagley on A History of The American People is suggestive of a view on his part that the study of American history is worthy of student time and effort. Of course, statements made jointly by Beard and his co-authors in these school histories defending American history as worth-while may not be presumed to reflect firm convictions of Beard's. Any one of these arguments may, as a matter of fact, just as plausibly feature the cherished beliefs of the co-author involved as those of Beard. However, by the very fact of his participation it seems fair to take for granted this historian's willingness to endorse the ideas expressed in these statements.

In A History of the American People, Beard and Bagley support the study of American history on the ground that it constitutes effective civic education, and they report the major motive of this particular



book to be citizenship training by means of promoting understanding of the various characteristics of American society. Such preparation is possible, these authors claim, only as students examine present controversies and events on the basis of their historical development:

One great motive has dominated the content and arrangement of the volume: the preparation of children for citizenship through an understanding of the ideals, institutions, achievements and problems of our country. . . . It [preparation for citizenship] can be done only by teaching boys and girls to think of events and issues of the living present in the light of their historical past, by giving them, above all, a sense of historical continuity.<sup>2</sup>

Beard's participation in the preparation of textbooks in world and European history with authors Bagley and Robinson carries the suggestion, certainly, that he had reason to believe students might profit from the study of world and European history. And in the introduction to Our Old World Background, an elementary world history, he and Bagley point up specifically possible educational outcomes of studying world history--additional ideas, an enlarged "horizon of thought," a greater understanding of the history of one's own country, a heightened awareness of the ingredients involved in civic responsibility, and an increased appreciation of other countries and the obligations accruing from being citizens of one of the leading countries in the world. The degree of support given by Beard to these various joint claims the writer can not presume to know on the face of the statement itself but thinks it fair to assume at least acquiescence:

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2. Charles A. Beard and William C. Bagley, A History of the American People. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1943, p. iii.

We have sought to grasp the essential ideas and movements of mankind and to present them in clear and simple form. We believe that no pupils can go carefully through these pages without making important additions to their stock of ideas and without enlarging the horizon of their thought. We believe that they will have a firmer grasp upon the history of our own country and a better understanding of their coming duties as citizens of this republic. . . .

The charge is often made that Americans are provincial in their outlook. . . . Whatever may be the merits of this old dispute, we have deliberately aimed at helping to make Americans less provincial by introducing them early to two fundamental ideas: the unity of all history and the importance of enriching our national life by the study of the best in all the past and in all the nations. . . .

We are inviting the co-operation of teachers in the pressing task of preparing the American people, in spirit and in understanding, for the imposing world destiny to which they are called by their enterprise, their wealth, and their power.<sup>3</sup>

World history, then, these writers imply, will help the careful and thoughtful reader to see his country's development in relation to the general story of mankind. The study of world history, Beard and Bagley suggest, too, will promote acquaintance with the idea of the unity of all history and with information about outstanding achievements "of all the past, in all the nations." Such acquaintance may have the effect of helping to eradicate provincialism and of preparing our young people for the leadership role in international affairs that they will need to play as citizens of one of the more powerful of the world's countries.

In The Nature of the Social Sciences, Beard presents outlines in the fields of economics, political science, sociology, geography and

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3. Charles A. Beard and William C. Bagley, Our Old World Background. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1922, pp. vi-vii.

history which seem to him to represent the maximum complication of general structure adapted to instruction in the school and to possess scholarly authenticity. Both the nature of the history outline and his introduction to it indicate belief on his part that history other than American is worthy of study. As he presents the outline, he points up the premise upon which it is based--that the chief function of instruction in history is to give students an appreciation of the changing nature of the social scene through the passing years and to offer as faithful a picture as possible of the beginnings and development of civilization, a description which provides information necessary to comprehension of the "determining and conditioning" factors of the present scene. This proposition, which Beard emphasizes at a number of points in his writing, seems to the writer to be basic to his view concerning the educational worth of the study of history:

The outline is based on the assumption that the chief function of instruction in history in the schools is to give the pupils a strong sense of social development in time and to describe as accurately as possible the origins and development of culture. This description emerges into the present situation and presents knowledge indispensable to any understanding of the determining and conditioning realities of the contemporary world--institutions, interests, habits, customs, beliefs, and ideas within which pupils must live and work.<sup>4</sup>

Since Beard holds that "accurate description of the origins and development of culture" is a chief function of instruction in history and that this description provides "knowledge necessary to an understanding of the determining and conditioning realities of the

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4. Charles A. Beard, The Nature of the Social Sciences. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934, p. 211.

contemporary world," it seems reasonable to suppose that he would advocate the study of world history, which deals with the origins and development of culture not touched upon in American history instruction.

Continuing his introduction to the history outline, Beard further supports the study of world history by pointing out that the examination of social institutions and operations common to all epochs gives coherence to the study of history and provides comprehension of the present culture and its trends:

In all epochs certain social structures and functions, similar if not identical in objective, are to be found. Some of them are primary, have to do with the care of life--food, clothing, and shelter. Others are secondary, in part derivative, and have to do with the superstructure of civilization. It is by examining these structures and functions at each epoch in history that coherence is given to the study of the subject and that insight into the present cultural complex and its tendencies is gained.<sup>5</sup>

Beard's contention that the perusal of these structures and functions over a range of epochs helps history to "hang together" for the student and promotes insight into the current scene again makes plausible the supposition that he would defend the usefulness of studying more history than simply that of this country.

The outline presented by Beard includes two parts, a listing of epochs with their striking features and a table of the chief structures and functions to be examined during the consideration of each epoch. The very form of this outline constitutes for the present writer conclusive evidence that Beard considers the study of world and European

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5. Ibid., p. 215.

history at least appropriate, if not necessary, in the schools. The listing of epochs contains primitive origins, the ancient world, the medieval age, the age of the Renaissance, the modern age, and the rise and growth of the United States. His tabulation of structures and functions, which are to be considered in connection with each epoch, include such topics as international relations of government, economic institutions, family institutions, the arts, varieties of intellectual interest, and institutions and conceptions of liberty.<sup>6</sup>

The subordinate position of the epoch termed the rise and growth of the United States within an outline purported by this historian to be useful for the schools seems to the writer to be clear indication on Beard's part that the study of other history may be profitable. In addition, the suggestion that such structures as economic and family institutions be studied in relation to each epoch points to the conclusion for this writer that Beard, if he put history into his curriculum at all, would include world and European history.

To summarize, it may be said that Beard supports the study of world and European history in the schools on these grounds:

- 1) such study may enlarge the students' horizon of thought;
- 2) it may give an increased understanding of the United States through awareness of the unity of history;
- 3) it may bring about increased appreciation of other countries and of the responsibility involved in being citizens of an important world power; and,
- 4) it may promote a strong sense of "social development in time" which contributes to understanding of the various aspects of the contemporary world.

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6. Ibid., pp. 217-225.

His belief that American history is appropriate for study in the schools is attested to by his participation in preparing American history school textbooks and by arguments advanced in defense of these books to the effect that knowledge of their content promotes effective citizenship.

2. Should history be required rather than merely made available?

The writer has been unable to find a single instance in which Beard has made an outright plea for history as a required subject in the schools of the country. His views reported in the foregoing discussion on the role which knowledge of American and world or European history may play in promoting understanding of the current social scene and his arguments to be reported later in this chapter for retaining history as a separate subject in the school curriculum strongly suggest that he favors including history in the school program as an important part of general education but give no warrant for assuming he would require the subject.

3. Should the study of history be strongly urged for all students in the nation's schools or only for those who are expected to become "leaders"?

It has just been pointed out that the several effects discussed earlier which Beard has said may come from the study of history, such as increased understanding of the present scene and greater appreciation of the duties of citizenship, are suggestive of a possible conviction of this historian's that the study of history should be a part

of the education of all students in the nation's schools. His belief that information about the past contributes to the fulfillment of what he considers the major task of social studies instruction, the creation of effective personalities, implies the same view. He does not, however, argue for extensive study of history by the general run of students. His promotion of the ideas that knowledge of history is a necessary part of the training of our potential leaders and that the training of a large share of these leaders is the responsibility of the schools of the nation gives clear evidence, the writer believes, of Beard's support of the study of history for those who seemingly will be leaders.

In A Charter for the Social Sciences, which was drafted by Beard for the Commission on the Social Studies, his discussion of the objectives of social studies instruction as the development of effective individuals of varied accomplishments and interests has direct bearing on his view of the issue under consideration. He claims that instruction which produces "rich and many-sided personalities" does its work, at least in part, by furnishing information about a wide variety of affairs including those of the distant past:

Our fundamental purpose . . . . is the creation of rich many-sided personalities; equipped with practical knowledge and inspired by ideals so that they can make their way and fulfill their mission in a changing society which is a part of a world complex. Such rich and many-sided personalities are informed about a wide range of affairs, both immediate and remote.<sup>7</sup>

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7. Charles A. Beard, A Charter for the Social Sciences. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932, pp. 96-7.

This primary objective--the creation of effective, many-sided personalities--presumably refers to the instruction of all students who may be enrolled in the social studies. If so, he appears to be making the claim that knowledge of history is essential for any student enrolled in the social studies, whether a potential leader or not.

Beard presents a line of argument in The Nature of the Social Sciences which may seem to be in conflict with the view ascribed to him thus far. He grants that most people could live and work without much knowledge of history. And he indicates these convictions: knowledge of history is a necessary part of the training of our potential leaders; and, the obligation of the schools to furnish a large share of the country's leadership justifies the inclusion of history in the curriculum. He says,

Doubtless it may be contended that a farm boy need not know anything about the structure of a medieval manor in order to plow a straight furrow or that a modern accountant may keep books accurately without knowing anything about the economic teachings of Thomas Aquinas; but the utility of written history is not thereby destroyed. The whole frame of interests and ideas in which modern intelligence works is a heritage from history. . . . All efforts to understand the realities of the present, to guess the trends of the future, and to discover the possibilities and limits of action require some penetration into the depths of history as time occurrences and a comprehensive view of the width of history, even though neither the penetration nor the view can be perfect. If many individuals can live and work without much knowledge of history, those who lead and direct in political, economic, and cultural affairs should not, and the schools must perforce supply a large portion of that leadership. Herein lies the special connection between written history and the objectives and means of social instruction in the schools.<sup>8</sup>

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8. Chas. A. Beard, The Nature of the Social Sciences, p. 69.



Here his argument for any extensive study of history seems to apply only to the country's potential leaders who are in school.

On the one hand, then, Beard has said the many can live and work without much knowledge of history, even though leaders in the social realm cannot. He also has contended elsewhere, however, that the creation of as many effective personalities as possible--presumably the fundamental purpose of social studies instruction--is dependent in part upon the students' gaining information about a wide range of affairs, both immediate and remote.

At least two hypotheses seem adequate to explain the apparent discrepancy in Beard's position on this issue. One possible explanation is that the primary objective of social studies instruction laid out by Beard--the creation of rich, many-sided personalities--refers not to all students, but only to potential leaders. The plausibility of this hypothesis is brought into serious question not only by Beard's participation in preparation of school textbooks in history, to be used by many students who presumably were not potential leaders, but also by the arguments in the introductions to some of these books that knowledge of history is essential to effective citizenship training. For example, the introduction to A First Book in American History says that citizenship training is important for all students, and that certain phases of American history should be presented in a beginning course as part of citizenship training for the benefit of those who will not continue their study.<sup>9</sup>

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9. Charles A. Beard and William C. Bagley, A First Book in American History. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1943, p. vi.

A second possible hypothesis to explain the apparent discrepancy is concerned with the meaning he intended to convey by the assertion that the many can live and work without much knowledge of history. Beard could consistently make that statement and still hold that it is desirable for all students to be enrolled at some time in a course involving historical content, even though many of them would end their study of history with such a course. The latter hypothesis seems the more acceptable, inasmuch as it reconciles all of Beard's statements on the subject without requiring any unusual or forced interpretations of his language.

As the writer interprets it, then, Beard's view of this issue may be summarized in the following way:

- 1) to gain the necessary insight into the present scene, potential leaders should study history extensively in the schools; and,
  - 2) although most students can get along without much knowledge of the subject, some study of history is important for all as a part of citizenship training.
4. Should history be maintained in the school curriculum as an organized discipline, or should its content merely be employed in contributing to the understanding of social problems being studied under some other curricular arrangement?

On this issue, Beard's position seems to be that there is much educational profit to be gained in studying history as history and that the study of "current problems" may be a superficial enterprise. He would not deny that value may accrue from work in courses organized

around current problems when those courses complement but do not purport to replace history.

Writing in 1938 in Social Education, Beard clearly manifests his concern about the issue. He points out that he has noted a tendency among teachers of the humanistic subjects to discard history as a kind of old almanac and to concentrate upon events of the day or of the past few days. Where the long past is not entirely discarded, he explains, "it is likely to be employed merely in furnishing illustrations of current conceptions and practices, or, perhaps, the processes by which they came into being."<sup>10</sup> He regards this tendency as wholesome in many respects because it reveals a growing interest in public affairs and a desire to come to grips with pressing issues of the times, and also because it represents a healthy revolt against the political and military history that almost monopolized for many years the thought of historians who wrote for the schools. He admits that if history is being "shot out to the rubbish heap, no small part of the responsibility rests upon the historians themselves."<sup>11</sup>

Yet he indicates concern about the tendency to throw history away or to treat it as "a convenient nuisance." And he wonders if instruction essentially concerned with current systems of thought can give students a realistic understanding of the world in which they are to

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10. Charles A. Beard, "Memorandum from an Old Worker in the Vineyard," Social Education, Volume 2 (September, 1938), p. 383.

11. Ibid., p. 383.

live and work, if it best prepares them to cope with present social issues, and if it represents a widening and enriching of knowledge and thought.<sup>12</sup>

A number of his writings, both independent and collaborative, deal with the question of the relative effectiveness in social studies classes of the "historical approach" and of the "current problems approach" in promoting understanding of the current scene and in helping students to cope with problems of their modern world. In these writings he supports the former approach by frequent explanations of the ways in which history illuminates the present and by admonitions that the study of current problems outside an historical framework can lead to superficial grasp of their meaning and to poor judgment concerning them. In an introduction to The Making of American Civilization, a textbook authored with the collaboration of Mary Beard, he defends the "historical approach" as a means of giving students a "realistic knowledge" of their world, explaining that current issues cannot be understood without knowledge of how they originated and that to discuss them strictly in the light of their present forms is to discourage thorough habits of thought:

The growing demand for social studies that will give boys and girls in the schools a "realistic knowledge" of the society in which they live and are to take part as citizens seems to us an encouraging sign of the times. But we cling to the belief that this realistic knowledge can best be acquired by what is

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12. Ibid., p. 383.

called "the historical approach". . . . Many features of contemporary society are as old as the American nation, or older, even though they may present novel aspects today or be called by different names. How can anyone hope to comprehend . . . . the issues of currency, banking, foreign trade, agriculture, the use of natural resources, and the interpretation of the Constitution, without knowledge of how they arose? The American people have been coping with them for more than a century. To discuss these matters merely in the light of today, or of the past few years, is to discuss them superficially and to encourage the formation of frivolous judgments.<sup>13</sup>

One of the ideas expressed above--that the institutions, customs, and issues of our present world can be best understood by finding out about their beginnings--was spelled out in specific terms by co-authors Beard and James Harvey Robinson in a European history textbook as early as 1907. They take the position that present events grow out of and are explained by earlier ones and that, therefore, the present scene is not clearly comprehensible without knowledge of history:

It is indeed a curious and important discovery of modern times that the existing forms of government and social life are not to be understood by simply examining them but by taking the trouble to find out how they came to be what they are. Every event in our own lives is determined and explained by preceding events, and this is equally true of the history of nations. Every country--England, Germany, France, Italy, Russia--has its own special past, which serves to explain in a large measure why each differs from all the others. The present situation of each would be incomprehensible except for the key furnished by history. It is history alone that makes clear why Germany is a federation like the United States but nevertheless very different in many respects; why England is a monarchy but far more like a republic than its fellow kingdom

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13. Charles A. and Mary Beard, The Making of American Civilization. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1937, p. v.

Prussia, why France is a republic while Spain remains a monarchy. . . . The history of nations serves to show why they are what they are and why they do as they do. For institutions are, after all, only the habits of nations and can be understood only by discovering their origin and following their gradual development.

One may look to history to explain almost everything, great and small, from the constitution of a state to the form of a written character or the presence of useless buttons upon a man's coat sleeve.<sup>14</sup>

Writing in The Nature of the Social Sciences, Beard extends a step further the idea that knowledge of their historical development is necessary to clear comprehension of existing social arrangements. He says that every current problem is a product of history as actuality, that each problem has "roots in other problems," and that such a problem can be clarified for a student only by his coming to see historical beginnings as "conditioning forces." (Beard defines history as actuality to mean not written history but the stream of all the events that have taken place or that are taking place in the human enterprise.) Present problems have appeared as a result of the play between interests and ideas in earlier times, and the ability to understand a given problem lies not in examining its historical origin in isolation but in attaining also a knowledge of the historical events to which it is related:

Every contemporary problem, so-called, is a product of history as actuality, has wide-ramifying roots in other problems, and can only be illuminated by reference to historical origins as conditioning forces. These problems have

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14. James Harvey Robinson and Charles A. Beard, The Development of Modern Europe, Vol. 1. Boston: Ginn and Company, 1907, pp. 1-2.

thrust themselves up into the present as the result of the movement of interests and ideas in the past--changes in substantial conditions and in thought about them. . . . It is not by superficially examining the historical origins of each that we can grasp it most firmly but by obtaining first a wide, deep, and accurate knowledge of the areas of history to which it is related by ramifications and affiliations.<sup>15</sup>

Delving into the origin of a particular problem, then, according to Beard, is not enough to provide adequate understanding of it. Knowledge of the conditioning factors out of which the problem grew is necessary. Thus, to put Beard's view in more concrete terms, in order to understand clearly what is termed the housing problem in the United States today, a student would need to study about more than merely the beginning of scarcity of housing and the appearance of slum tenements. He would need also to examine conditions giving rise to the housing problem, such as rapid population growth, industrialization and the growth of cities, the interdependence of people resulting from these other factors, and the growth of the concept of social welfare as a function of government. As a matter of fact, Beard says the student may gain the clearest understanding of an issue like housing by obtaining knowledge of areas of history to which it is related before dealing with it as a problem. This idea is in direct repudiation of the position presented by John Dewey in Democracy and Education and accepted by Carl Becker to the effect that past events cannot be separated from the living present and retain meaning and that the true

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15. Charles A. Beard, The Nature of the Social Sciences, pp. 68-9.

starting point of history is always some present situation with its problems.<sup>16</sup>

The implication of Beard's proposition seems to the writer to be that the study of current problems with some reference to their historical origins will not serve as an adequate substitute for history.

A further argument closely related to the preceding one for the study of history in preference to current problems as a means of understanding the present is that only through acquaintance with history does the student gain a knowledge of dynamics or a time sense. Social studies courses, treating of matters "within a shallow time depth," do not give this sense of development and change. And without it, Beard suggests, the student's preparation for dealing with significant issues, institutions, and ideas which are a part of the present scene is superficial and inadequate:

Any treatment of current systems of thought which does not deal with its development or dynamics and with the forces outside that impinge upon it is as unreal as the old drum and trumpet history once taught in the schools. And how are we to get an idea of its dynamics if we know little or nothing of the time trend in which the system appeared? . . . .

. . . .In my opinion, books and courses on current "problems" lack the substance of life which is dynamic, and only out of history can come knowledge of dynamics, for it is not given to us to trace the far trajectory of the future. Social studies are necessarily superficial in that they treat of matters within a shallow time depth--the alleged present which does not exist--or two, three, or more little years. They are wanting in time sense. They belong with the movies and sports rather than with education as preparation for dealing with the world and its work, its tough heritage

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16. John Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 251.



which is ever with us, and its grand and universal conceptions.<sup>17</sup>

In the foregoing argument, Beard implies that awareness of America's inheritance of social arrangements, ideas, and customs which have been in the process of developing and changing over a long time span gives the student a deeper insight into and consequent greater ability to cope with the nation's institutions and concepts than he can get otherwise. For example, a student with a knowledge of American history which includes information about the process of development and change in the nation's Constitution, gains a time sense which improves his ability to understand and handle intelligently present problems concerning the Constitution. The Constitution has changed in several ways down through the years: 1) by means of Congressional interpretation of parts of the document (such as the general welfare and commerce clauses), which has extended the functions of the federal government; 2) through Supreme Court interpretations and decisions which have altered in character as the nation's institutions and ideas have been modified; and 3) through actual Constitutional amendment as prevailing conditions in the country have seemed to warrant it. Knowledge of the ways in which the meaning of the Constitution has changed and of instances of these changes throughout the years promotes understanding by students of the nature of the Constitution today and should make for more intelligent reaction to proposed current

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17. Charles A. Beard, "A Memorandum from an Old Worker in the Vineyard," Social Education, Vol. 2 (September, 1938), pp. 383-4.

Constitutional changes and to the attitudes and arguments built up around them.

The argument above not only makes a case for the usefulness of historical information in helping students cope with present day issues, but also indicates a belief on Beard's part that social studies courses, with their emphasis on current aspects of problems, give only superficial help to the student who would understand his society. Beard's case for history is also most of his case against current problems courses. For the most part, the case seems to be a consistent one. However, his claim that such social studies courses belong with the movies and sports rather than with education as preparation for dealing with the world and its work does not appear to be reconcilable with a statement he makes later in the same short article, "A Memorandum from an Old Worker in the Vineyard." Closing the article, he says he is not suggesting that social instruction concern itself either with history or with social studies but that the social studies should be the crown of history and not a substitute for it.<sup>18</sup>

If social studies courses are in a class with baseball so far as social instruction is concerned, then why make them the "crown of history"? Possible explanations of this apparent discrepancy within Beard's position that suggest themselves to the writer are these:

- 1) he, perhaps carelessly, made his point more vigorously when he classed social studies with sports and movies than his general position

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18. Ibid., p. 385.

on the subject of social studies in the curriculum actually warrants; or 2) a very strong belief of his in the unique merits of history in promoting understanding of the present scene dominated his thinking when he compared the educational effects of current problems courses with those of movies and sports, whereas a feeling of obligation toward a show of sympathy for and harmony with advocates of social studies instruction motivated his closing remarks about both history and social studies being subjects of social instruction. In any case, regardless of the accuracy of these explanations, both statements make abundantly clear Beard's conviction that the study of history has much to offer toward promoting understanding of the current scene.

Beard defends the study of history as history on yet another ground: to be well educated, one has to come into direct contact with "first rate minds."

No person can be called truly educated unless he has come into intimate and immediate contact with first rate minds. With all due respect for the makers of textbooks, of whom I am one, few among them can claim the strength, insight, mastery, and dignity of style to be found in the great writings of history--Aristotle, Plato, Adam Smith, or Alexander Hamilton, for instance. In my opinion, the wishy washing, slovenly, third-rate style of modern books, betraying poverty of thought and lack of energy is largely due to the fact that the authors have made no long and assiduous study of works truly classic, that is, historical, in wisdom and expression. And power of style is power of mind. If history is thrown out and we concentrate on contemporary newspapers and textbooks, we are bound to be at best second rate. Even if the maker of a text is a distinguished stylist, he is certainly not likely to be a distinguished maker of history in the manner of Jefferson and Hamilton.<sup>19</sup>

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19. Ibid., pp. 384-5.

Implicit in the foregoing argument are these claims: 1) the reader of history will become acquainted with the significant ideas which are products of the insights of these great men, and 2) the reader may learn intellectual discipline from the example afforded by great books.

The weakness in Beard's argument is that the direct acquaintance with "great minds" which he seeks to foster could be achieved much more fully in a course in philosophy, or political science, or literature, than in a history course. Beard could argue that such courses, so organized as to include the writings of "great minds", would come under the heading of history as he conceives it; but this interpretation shifts the terms of the argument.

That courses labeled "history" are more likely to include bits from the great writings of the past than are courses labeled "current problems" is highly probable; but if contacts with these great minds is a major aim, neither type of course helps much.

Beard's position on the issue under discussion, in summary, seems to embody these convictions:

- 1) the contact with "great minds" offered by the study of history contributes substantially to the liberal education of the student;
- 2) increased understanding of and ability to cope with the present scene may be provided by the study of history;
- 3) for the two preceding reasons, the study of history as an

organized discipline has an important place in social instruction; and

- 4) social studies or "current problems" courses will be superficial for students not grounded in the history relevant to the material of these courses.

5. Are controversial issues best understood by pursuing a chronological study of history which reveals their past forms clearly and to some extent outlines their present forms; or are they best understood by a direct consideration of the current aspects of the issues with historical background brought in only when it is clearly necessary for understanding?

Beard holds that the attitudes and information necessary for dealing effectively with current controversies are better cultivated through the systematic study of history than through a direct examination of the controversies themselves.

Outlining specific reasons why he considers history helpful in dealing adequately with controversial issues, he says that a rational consideration of such questions requires acquaintance with relevant data, skill in getting information, and a temperate spirit, and he asserts that such knowledge, skill, and general attitude can be attained better through a study of history than by starting with question "hot in the day's news". Since most of the issues have been persistent ones, he suggests, one may understand their character better if he has learned of their beginnings and seen the forms they have taken through the years. In other words, the very nature of most issues requires that one who would get at "the facts involved" and "all the opinions involved" must trace their development through the years:

. . . . A rational treatment [of controversial issues] calls for knowledge of relevant facts, skill in research, and the judicial temper. If any one is to state the problems clearly and convincingly, he must know how to get at the facts involved. If he is to treat them rationally, he must know how to take an all-round view with all the opinions involved. Such skill and such spirit, we believe, can be better acquired by beginning with the problems of long ago than by starting with questions that are "hot in the day's news." Nearly all the issues now up for consideration are issues that have long been before the American people, and one may more firmly grasp their nature and penetrate to their central points if one has first traced their origins and then followed their emergence into our own times.<sup>20</sup>

Beard does not make clear in the preceding statements just how an historical approach to controversies cultivates the judicial spirit. Writing in Social Education, however, he presents an argument for dealing with controversies through a systematic study of history which explains how such study makes possible a dispassionate consideration of matters about which we care deeply. He points out the fact of our "roaring prejudices" on current questions and then asserts it is difficult for us to look at such matters calmly. Learning historical backgrounds on these issues, on the other hand, gives information about them without eliciting passionate outbursts. Thus, to the writer he implies that the study of history as it relates to controversial issues creates conditions under which the judicial spirit may grow, conditions which because of our strong prejudices, are not possible in a direct consideration of the issues:

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20. Charles A. and Mary Beard, The Making of American Civilization, pp. v and vi.

Everybody knows that we all have a lot of roaring prejudices on current questions, of labor and capital, for example, and that it is a frightful strain on our common sense to look at such matters calmly. Yet it is the business of education to train our minds for considering such issues. . . . To my way of thinking it is bad pedagogy, that is, likely to defeat the ends sought, to jump right into the middle of current disputes without having any knowledge of their history, of the complicated circumstances in which they arose. A knowledge of the rise of the industrial system and the labor movement is, as I see things, a far better equipment for dealing with the Committee for Industrial Organization than any textbook on contemporary economic theory or civics.

And the acquisition of such knowledge through a study of history is not accompanied by the heats and distempers that accompany the reading of current news stories about strikes and riots. . . . It is possible to find in distant debates on the tariff question. . . . arguments and conclusions of minds superior to the average run today and at the same time pertinent and informing in respect of a matter as current as the discussion of the reciprocal trade treaties.<sup>21</sup>

In summary, approaching controversial issues through a study of history, according to Beard, gives skills and information necessary to effective handling of the issues and makes possible a calm and dispassionate consideration of these controversies. For these reasons, writing with Mary Beard, he draws this conclusion:

When educators lay emphasis on realistic knowledge and on the skill and judicial temper which characterize civilized men and women, they are bound to make use of history taught as history and not as haphazard comment on current events.<sup>22</sup>

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21. Charles A. Beard, "A Memorandum from an Old Worker in the Vineyard," Social Education, Volume 2 (September, 1938), p. 384.

22. Charles A. and Mary Beard, The Making of American Civilization, p. vi.

6. Is history most effectively learned by starting with a detailed study of a limited period or area or by beginning with a general survey of a broad area or time span?

The writer's examination of Beard's writings yielded no comment on this issue. Since Beard expresses himself with vigor on what he regards as important pedagogical questions, there is every reason to suppose, on the basis both of his writings about the teaching of history and of his writings designed for use by students, that he would favor as much as possible of both kinds of study, and that he would regard the question of which way to begin as trifling--comparable, perhaps, to a controversy over whether one's first contact with the world's great literature should be with poetry or prose.

7. Should young students become familiar with the content of history through casual and unorganized experiences before attempting a systematic study of history?

On the ground that some students will have no contact with historical content beyond a first course and that knowledge of important problems in American history and of the bold outline of the development of this country is necessary to effective citizenship, Beard advances in conjunction with William C. Bagley the position that even the earliest courses dealing with the subject matter of history should be systematically organized.

In the introduction to A First Book in American History Beard and Bagley say that an understanding of such topics as the growth of American nationality, the outstanding personalities and events that reflect the main tendencies of American life, the growth of humans and



democratic ideals, and the place of America among the nations should be promoted in a first history course as a part of citizenship training because many of the students will not continue their study of history further. And the authors indicate they have endeavored to give intermediate pupils some understanding of these topics.<sup>23</sup>

Dealing with such topics in itself implies a rather high order organization of content, and such organization in turn suggests approval of systematic ordering of subject matter.

Beard and Bagley spell out more clearly their advocacy of organization of content in beginning courses in their discussion of plans usually employed by writers of elementary history texts, their rejection of these plans, and their own plan used in writing A First Book in American History. The two plans usually followed by writers of history for intermediate grades are described by Beard and Bagley as casting history in the form of a series of biographies or as condensing a more advanced book into a shorter form which introduces the same characters and events but says less about each one. The authors discard both of these plans because of what they term "facts" based upon classroom experience.

They reject the biographical plan on the ground that children weary of biography and "lose sight of American history" in a maze of personal chronicles.<sup>24</sup> This phrasing suggests that they consider it

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23. Charles A. Beard and William C. Bagley, A First Book in American History, pp. v-vi.

24. Ibid., p. vi.

important to preserve the logical organization of American history, even in a first course.

As for the practice of condensing a more advanced book into shorter form, Beard and Bagley point out that it has an advantage in orderliness and logical arrangement over a mere succession of biographies. But, they feel that such an arrangement is monotonous and fails to make a lasting impression on young minds.<sup>25</sup> The reference to orderliness and logical arrangement as an advantage is indication that Beard and Bagley value systematic organization of content even in a first course.

The authors of A First Book in American History, assuming that only a few simple and elementary truths can be brought home to children of the intermediate grades, adopted three devices in organizing their textbook:

- 1) attaching the characters and events of each chapter to a simple unifying problem or project and arranging these projects so that collectively they present an outline of the chief features of American history;
- 2) using the biographical method freely without obscuring the large movements of American history; and
- 3) employing condensed narrative to a sufficient extent to give a connected account of the rise and growth of the American people.<sup>26</sup>

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25. Ibid., p. vi.

26. Ibid., pp. vi-vii.

The procedure outlined above can be justified only on the assumption that logical organization of content by those presenting it will result in meaningful command by students (even at the intermediate level) of the content as organized for them. Beard and his co-author thus advocate, in the interest especially of the best possible citizenship training for students who may not continue in school, a logically organized beginning experience with history at the intermediate level.

8. Should the history teacher or the writer of history textbooks rigorously confine himself to material he has found to be true, or should he sometimes depart from this principle for the purpose of strengthening the loyalty of people to their country or of unifying them?

Beard holds that history teachers and writers should feel obligated to give students an accurate picture of the conditioning factors, forces, and events which have gone into making up the present scene. He sees "enlightened patriotism" as a desirable outcome of history instruction. He does not find that helping students get accurate information and promoting enlightened patriotism are incompatible; indeed, he thinks accurate information and skill in acquiring it are necessary to intelligent loyalty to country.

The social sciences (which for Beard include history) must furnish accurate information to the schools which will enable students to deal intelligently with their world and its problems, and, he maintains, in the process of helping students develop latent powers, social studies teachers can show them how knowledge may be acquired, thus promoting a skill that may be useful throughout life:

The primary information which social science must supply through the schools to individuals is information concerning the conditioning elements, realities, forces, and ideas of the modern world in which life must be lived. Any representation of them is bound to be partial and out of perspective, such is the frailty of the human mind, but it must be attempted in textbooks, supplementary works, maps, motion pictures, and every possible apparatus for conveying information vividly and realistically to the immature mind.

To attain information certain skills are necessary. These are signs and instruments of power. . . . A knowledge of how to acquire knowledge is a permanent possession which can be used throughout life. The acquisition of such knowledge can be promoted by discipline in the methods of attaining access to information--the use of encyclopedias, authorities, documents, sources, statistical collections.<sup>27</sup>

Writing in the New Republic in the late 1930's concerning the reasons for the First World War and the possibility of another war, Beard indicates the importance of learning the truth and getting rid of delusions as an aid in dealing intelligently and effectively with such problems as war threats. Action without knowledge and even our most cherished illusions, he says, are dangerous and must be combatted with truth:

We cannot know the whole truth [about why we went to war in 1917], but we can know many relevant truths. Unless we are to surrender to the belief that truth is of no significance whatever for life, we must seek to get at all the truth we can discover. Surely practice without knowledge is dangerous. We must seek likewise to get rid of all the illusions we can, however dear they may be on the assumption that in the long run delusions are dangerous, and that as much truth as possible is good for us.

Now we confront the possibility of another war in Europe. If we want to stay out of it, we can find some assistance in all the truth we can get about how we became involved in the last war. Even if we are thirsting for another war ourselves,

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27. Charles A. Beard, A Charter for the Social Sciences, pp. 98-99.

either for democracy or anything else, we can profit from knowledge of our entanglements in the last war.<sup>28</sup>

If Beard believes that accurate information about past problems is helpful in the solution of similar present ones and that delusions about such matters endanger effective solution, then it logically follows that he must believe history teachers and textbook writers should try to present to students the most accurate accounts of past events they can.

In their explanation of the plan and purposes of their textbook, The Making of American Civilization, Charles and Mary Beard deal both with what they see as the results of distorting or glossing over reality and with the outcome of trying to teach the truth about America's development. They indicate the belief that "unreasoning sentimentality" and "the passions of partisan criticism", when allowed to operate in the work of textbook writers, obscure reality for students. And they suggest that an opportunity for knowledge of the whole American story brings the comprehension which is necessary for dealing with the issues faced by American citizens. As usual in the case of collaborative statements, the writer is assuming no more than acceptance by Charles Beard of the following argument:

In content and form it [the textbook] seeks to put high school pupils on their mettle by introducing them, as far as their maturity will permit to the great issues of life which men and women throughout the nation have to face. We have

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28. Charles A. Beard, "Why Did We Go to War?" The New Republic, Volume 90, (March 10, 1937), p. 128.

tried to open wide the gateways to knowledge of the whole American heritage. We have sought to avoid the unreasoning sentimentality that glosses over reality and the passions of partisan criticism that distort the comprehension of reality.<sup>29</sup>

This view of the Beards may be clarified by the following example: If a group of students is told in glowing terms that the American colonists at the time of the American Revolution were perfectly agreed on independence and that they all fought devotedly for the cause, and if these students have the mother country described for them as unjustifiably cruel and oppressive, strong loyalty to country may result. But competent historians have said that a sizable group of colonists was indifferent to the outcome of the Revolution and that another group was actually loyal to Great Britain. Historians also have indicated that the British stand on taxing the colonies and on regulating their economic affairs was not considered irregular practice for an imperial power by the various nations of eighteenth-century Europe or by some of the American colonists. These students, then, gain a distorted picture of the Revolution because of instruction characterized by "unreasoning sentimentality" and "partisan criticism." And such distorted views, the Beards' position suggests, keep young people from dealing effectively with an issue like that of war and peace. Thus, there is a danger that students with such views may see dissent during a crisis as abnormal and accept the methods of suppression that

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29. Charles A. and Mary Beard, The Making of American Civilization, p. vii.

characterized the activities of, say, the Green Mountain Boys, or else decide that a particular cause is no good, since it has not unified the country as they mistakenly suppose the cause of independence to have done.

As for the merits of patriotic instruction, an appreciation of a country's accomplishments and belief in its powers are necessary to the security and the progressive development of a people and nation and may be promoted by history and social science instruction, according to Beard. Promoting ultranationalistic attitudes, he says in effect, is undesirable on the ground that such attitudes imperil the progress of the United States in the world of nations:

While social science is at war with hypocrisy and chauvinism as perils to the progressive development of the United States in the world of nations, it brings full tribute to that patriotism which is associated with heroic figures, such as Washington and Lincoln, recognizing its fundamental value to the safety of American society and in the making of a great civilization.

Loyalty to America, an appreciation of its achievements, and faith in its powers are indispensable to defense against attacks from without and to the promotion of the good life within. The wise, no doubt, draw upon the wisdom of all lands and all ages for strength and inspiration, but they know they have a geographical location and a cultural heritage. . . . The loyalty which history and social science can instill is, then, the loyalty of reasoned affection, not the loyalty of tribal prejudice.<sup>30</sup>

Beard's advocacy both of teaching what is true and of promoting patriotism seems to the writer on the face of it to leave unsettled an important question: What does a teacher do when he finds that building

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30. Charles A. Beard, A Charter for the Social Sciences, pp. 104-5.

appreciation of country and offering accurate information come into conflict with each other? The development of the large area in the southwest of the United States, referred to as the Mexican Cession at the time of its acquisition, is an achievement and figures in the heritage of America. Beard has said students should appreciate that heritage and may do so through instruction in history. But it is a fact that at the end of the Mexican War, which was fought allegedly because of a boundary dispute involving a small strip of land between the Nueces River and the Rio Grande, the negotiators for the victorious United States insisted on buying the great stretch of land, known as the Mexican Cession, from which later came the states of California, Nevada, and Utah, the largest part of New Mexico and Arizona, and a smaller part of Colorado--a land area which Mexico had refused to sell to the United States before the war. This fact, for some students, may decrease appreciation for the nation's heritage. Should a teacher suppress the fact in order to build national loyalty? Or should he give accurate information concerning the Mexican Cession which in some instances may shake students' loyalty? Although Beard's writings furnish little explicit help for a teacher in the dilemma just described, this historian's emphasis on the desirability of students' having access to accurate information in the social studies and his inclusion of the qualifying "enlightened" in his references to patriotism as a possible and desirable object of history instruction suggest an assumption on his part that the American record in relations with



other countries, taken all together, will stand close scrutiny and, in spite of episodes like the Mexican War, still call forth in students feelings of pride and loyalty toward their country. If this interpretation is correct, Beard surely would advocate presenting what is true even though it might place the United States in an unfavorable light.

In outline, Beard's view on the issue being discussed seems to the writer to run about as follows:

- 1) accurate information about past events is helpful in the development of capacity to deal effectively with pressing social problems;
- 2) love of country on the part of its citizens is requisite to the nation's progressive development; and,
- 3) the process of building up enlightened loyalty to country and that of acquiring accurate information are complementary rather than antithetical.

9. Should history be studied for its own sake as well as for the purpose of throwing light upon the present scene?

In the section of this chapter dealing with the advantages of retaining history as a separate subject in schools, Beard's strong conviction concerning the desirability of studying the subject to throw light on the present scene has been presented. In other writings about the study of history to be reported below, he has elaborated the same view. As for studying the subject simply for its own sake, he

takes the position that such a process is not only undesirable but impossible.

As early as 1907, James Harvey Robinson and Beard in the introduction of a European history textbook pointed out what at that time was the usual aim in the study of history, namely, learning about events and men of the past. They also called attention to what was then the modern discovery of the study of history as an aid to understanding the current scene, and even that early they emphasized the role that the study of history could play in such understanding. Robinson, Beard's teacher, was the older and more established of the two in 1907. He also has been particularly identified through the years with the idea that the function of knowledge of history is to clarify the present. It seems likely, then, that at the time of the writing of the history textbook under discussion, this idea should be ascribed to Robinson more so than to Beard. However, as has already been reported relative to his arguments for retaining history in the curriculum as a separate subject and as will be further shown in connection with the issue under discussion, later independent writings of Beard's reveal him as an active proponent of this view so often associated with Robinson:

History deals with the past and is ordinarily studied with no other aim than that of learning about bygone events and famous men long since dead. Yet it requires no large amount of observation to perceive that history casts light upon the customs and institutions which surround us at the present hours. Consequently, students of every branch of human knowledge--science, political economy, philosophy, politics, and religion--are turning more seriously than

ever before to the past, not for its own sake merely, but with a hope of coming to know the present better through a knowledge of the past.

It is indeed a curious and important discovery of modern times that the existing forms of government and social life are not to be understood by simply examining them, but by taking the trouble to find out how they came to be what they are.<sup>31</sup>

By 1934, Beard was expressing the view that the study of history and of the present scene are inseparable operations if work in the social studies is to be realistic, complete and accurate. And, he was saying, as might be expected in view of his ideas on teaching history presented thus far, that failure to relate the two processes--the study of history and the study of the present--, even if possible, would be undesirable:

A picture of the total situation [at any given time] or any particular phase of it has a certain time depth, represents a certain development in time, and the picture of time development in extenso will refer to the existing situation or situations. Is it through the study of history that the present is illuminated or through the study of the present that history is illuminated? The question may be argued either way, but the operations are inseparable in fact and are reciprocal in influence. To discard either is to make the social studies unreal, untrue to actuality. . . . Contemporary thought without history is impossible and history unrelated to contemporary knowledge and thought is likewise impossible. And either, if possible, would be undesirable in any frame of reference.<sup>32</sup>

Beard's idea that the study of history and of the present are inseparable operations may be clarified by concrete illustration.

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31. James Harvey Robinson and Charles A. Beard, The Development of Modern Europe, Volume 1, p. 1.

32. Charles A. Beard, The Nature of the Social Sciences, pp. 189-90.

For example, if a student sought realistic understanding of social conditions in Puerto Rico--the health, education, and employment picture, etc.--studying recent statistics would lead to comparing present day figures with ones of earlier periods for purposes of determining the degree of improvement in Puerto Rican social conditions through the years, if any. Or, suppose the student is dealing with the history of Puerto Rico as a possession of the United States and is reading about social conditions in Puerto Rico at the turn of the twentieth century and about the efforts of the United States to improve them. For a complete understanding of Puerto Rican history, he would find himself examining social conditions in modern Puerto Rico and comparing them with earlier conditions.

Beard's view assumes as a goal of the student a complete and realistic understanding of the situation being studied. If no such purpose is taken for granted, Beard's arguments that the study of the contemporary scene and history are inseparable and that the study of either of them without the other is impossible breaks down. The proposition that a study of history for its own sake will not yield complete and realistic understanding does not imply that such study cannot be carried on which the writer takes to be the operational significance of "impossible."

Beard's view on this issue, in short, appears to run something like this: The study of history may profitably be undertaken for the purpose of throwing light on the present scene. But the study of

history for its own sake is not only undesirable but impossible because a consideration of history which yields realistic and full comprehension of the situation being studied is not separable from study of related aspects of the contemporary scene.

10. Should the preparation of teachers in the field of history consist principally of pedagogical training or of instruction in the subject field to be taught?

Beard's treatment of the issue of teacher training emphasizes the importance of social studies teachers' being trained in contemporary thought about the social sciences, of their gaining insight into the character of modern society, and of their becoming thoroughly familiar with the subjects they are to teach. In short, Beard advocates a liberal education for social studies teachers (a category which includes history teachers) with careful attention in their training to the fields they expect to teach. He does not deal directly with the study of such subjects as teaching methods, philosophy of education, or educational psychology.

Writing for the Commission on the Social Studies of the American Historical Association about the demands placed upon teachers by the task of civic instruction, Beard urges teachers to take stock of themselves and to work out a philosophy of personal living and thinking in relation to their difficult job. He points out that methodology alone cannot enable them to do this. They must come to understand clearly the forces involved in modern civilization, he asserts, and they must cultivate both the habits of thought and the discerning spirit that

allow calm, impartial consideration of social pressures and issues.

He says:

They must secure for themselves a clear and realistic picture of modern society, gain insight into the central concepts of our industrial order and its culture, acquire habits of judicially examining its issues and problems, develop the power to look with calm and untroubled eyes upon the varieties of social pressures which bear in upon them, and nourish, by wide study, their capacity for dealing justly and courageously with current modes of living.<sup>33</sup>

Beard is not specific in the foregoing statement about which subjects of study, if any, may be expected to bring the desired understandings and habits. However, views already reported concerning the utility of a knowledge of the social sciences, and particularly of history, in dealing intelligently with the current scene suggest that he would advocate extensive work in these subjects as part of the social studies teacher's training. A direct plea for the study of the social sciences as a part of teacher preparation will be reported below.

Beard's idea that social studies teachers need to have training in contemporary thought about the nature of the social sciences is illustrated by his reference to what he terms one of the outstanding conceptions concerning the character of these fields of knowledge and to the importance for these teachers of understanding this idea. This conception--"that each of the social sciences, treated separately for convenience, leads inexorably into the total situation, physical and

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33. Charles A. Beard, A Charter for the Social Sciences, pp. 90-91.

cultural"--will be familiar to well trained teachers, and will, when relevant, affect instruction, Beard claims. The training of teachers in significant thought about the social sciences then, he says, is central to the attainment of the goals of social instruction:

. . . One of the outstanding conceptions of contemporary social thought is that each of the social sciences, treated separately for convenience, leads inexorably into the total situation--physical and cultural. Even Geography which began with physical objects having extension in space now flowers into cultural Geography representing also movement in time. . . . The informed and trained teacher will know this conception and fact in advance and treat each special subject, topic, or theme, set up of necessity for convenience, in the light of this finding. Thus the training of teachers in contemporary knowledge and thought becomes the key to the effective realization of objectives.<sup>34</sup>

Beard hastens to point out that the various social sciences, each with its own accumulation and unique organization of knowledge, are not divested of their separate identities simply because the study of each leads to its being incorporated into a "common unitary center." And he adds that only the teacher familiar with these separate bodies of content is capable of helping students understand their interrelatedness:

But it does not follow that the several social sciences lose their identity because the consideration of each of them leads to a common unitary center, or conception of totality, with which the philosopher wrestles. Each of them has accumulated an immense body of record, knowledge, and thought and each of them has erected categories of thought. . . . Only a teacher acquainted with these bodies of record, knowledge, thought, and thought-categories is competent in any way to guide pupils into the total situation which they will at length grasp with more or less thoroughness and comprehension, according to talents, industry, and extent of education.<sup>35</sup>

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34. Charles A. Beard, The Nature of the Social Sciences, pp. 190-91.

35. Ibid., p. 191.

Thus, Beard is saying that knowledge of significant generalizations in the field of the theory of the social sciences is not enough for effective teaching in social studies; knowledge of the subjects which make up the social sciences is necessary, too.

The main points of Beard's position on the matter of the training of history teachers are these:

- 1) Social studies teachers (including history teachers), if they are adequately to meet their responsibilities for civic instruction, need training in contemporary thought about the social sciences;
- 2) they need training resulting in a clear understanding of the characteristics of the present scene; and,
- 3) they need instruction in the bodies of knowledge and thought which make up the several social sciences.

His reference to the inadequacy of methodology as a sole tool for carrying out the responsibilities of civic instruction does not, in the writer's judgment, furnish sufficient information to justify an inference concerning his attitude toward the importance of methodology in teacher training.

11. Should the nature of the history curriculum in the schools be decided by specialists in the field of education, or should such decisions be made primarily by historians?

Beard takes the position that the competence of any particular group to establish objectives and curriculum in the social studies (which include history) is a relative matter and that the efforts of



any group must stand the tests of public appraisal and of the passage of time. And he gives indication that he thinks it appropriate for social scientists at least to work out aims and curricula and submit them to these tests.

In The Nature of the Social Sciences written for the Committee on the Social Studies of the American Historical Association, he outlines the controversy between educators and social scientists on this question. On the one side, he asserts, it is contended that the function of setting objectives belongs of right to laymen in the social sciences--specialists in pedagogy co-operating with school administrators, school boards, and in many cases, state legislators. A kind of empirical science of education has been taking form, Beard reports, whose practitioners seem to believe education experts are capable of setting up a curriculum and methodology designed to meet society's "needs" and of measuring the effectiveness of such a program:

Experts in education [these educators believe] can discover the needs of society, formulate the objectives to meet the needs, organize the curriculum to accomplish the objectives, create the method of instruction which will make the curriculum effective, devise intelligence and other new type tests for discovering whether and how far the educational medicine has accomplished the mental change, and establish empirical rules by which superintendents can grade the performances of teachers in operating the pedagogical machine.<sup>36</sup>

And on this neat system, Beard claims, certain schools of pedagogy have been concentrating considerable attention, especially with reference to social sciences.<sup>37</sup>

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36. Charles A. Beard, The Nature of the Social Sciences, p. 185.

37. Ibid., p. 185.

On the other side of the controversy, according to Beard, it has been argued that specialists in the social sciences are best fitted by training and knowledge to determine the objectives of instruction in them and to fix their nature and content. To some who take this position, although by no means to all, it appears presumptuous for persons having no thorough training in history, politics, economics, and sociology to undertake the selection of data and organization of materials for courses to be given in these fields. With their fond attention focused on their particular branches and without much thought about the function of education in society, Beard continues, specialists have forced upon the schools, more or less effectively, large programs of instruction in history, political science, economics and sociology.<sup>38</sup>

Discussing the prospects for settling this controversy, he points out that in this country forty-eight states and innumerable local authorities, hundreds of schools of education, public and private, and thousands of individuals and associations, in official and private capacities take a hand in determining objectives, curricula and tests. In the United States, then, Beard explains, there is no authority with legal competence to determine objectives of instruction in the social studies and the competence of private persons and associations must be regarded as relative, not absolute.<sup>39</sup>

He deals with the competence of social scientists to determine objectives and curricula in a discussion of the qualifications of the

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38. Ibid., pp. 185-6.

39. Ibid., pp. 186-7.

Commission on the Social Studies, which is made up of social scientists, to devise objectives and curricula. In view of the circumstances that obtain in the United States, he asks these questions: What is the position of this Commission and what is the nature of the operation open to it? The competence of the Commission, he asserts in answer to his own first question, flows from its representative character--its association of representatives from all the social sciences in a common undertaking, and from the validity of the social knowledge and thought which it brings to the task at hand. In reply to the second query, he says the Commission can examine the nature of the social studies, consider their methods and limitations, survey the requirements of society as revealed by thought, law, opinion, practices, and trends and take into its reckoning the problems of teaching realistically conceived. On this basis, he believes, it can construct a scheme of objectives and a program of social studies which it may submit with open hand and mind to the judgment of its contemporaries and the mercies of the years.<sup>40</sup>

In all of his discussion of this issue, Beard does not say directly whether he considers specialists in the field of education qualified to determine objectives and curricula in the social studies for the school. His reference to the necessity for regarding the competence of private persons and associations as relative, not absolute, suggests, however, that he does believe the educators' competence more

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40. Ibid., p. 187.

limited than the builders of the science of education described above seem inclined to believe. That he considers social scientists as an appropriate group to try at least to work out objectives and curricula is attested to by his statement of the qualifications of the Commission and his explanation of the procedures this group might follow in its attempt to work out objectives and a program of social studies to be submitted to the tests of the judgment of contemporaries and the passage of time. His belief that social scientists are qualified to deal with curricular problems of the schools is further illustrated by his own presentation in The Nature of the Social Sciences of outlines for possible use in the schools as bases for courses in geography, economics, political science, sociology, and history.<sup>41</sup>

In summary, Beard's view on this issue is that the competence of a given group to set up aims and courses in the social studies is relative, and that the efforts of any group must withstand the critical appraisal of contemporaries and the passage of time. Nowhere does he deny that either social scientists or educators or groups comprising both could devise programs which might meet these tests; but, he does not specifically concede the ability of the educators to do so. He does indicate belief in the qualifications of social scientists to work out programs to be submitted to the twin tests of contemporary judgment and time's passing.

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41. Ibid., pp. 195-225.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE VIEWS OF ARTHUR MEIER SCHLESINGER (1888-) ON ISSUES BEARING UPON THE TEACHING OF HISTORY

#### INTRODUCTION

Arthur Meier Schlesinger has expressed views bearing upon fewer of the issues under consideration in this thesis than any of the other historians who are subjects of the study. He has not made any comment on the questions of 1) the requirement of history in the schools; 2) the relative merits of a detailed study of a limited time span and a general survey as a beginning experience with history; 3) the comparative desirability of a casual, unorganized first experience with history and a logically developed beginning history course; 4) the kind of training prospective history teachers should receive; and 5) the most suitable builders of the history curriculum in the schools.

Schlesinger has expressed his opinions most explicitly on the topic of the desirability of studying history for its own sake and on the problem of whether history teachers and textbook writers should rigorously confine themselves to subject matter they have found to be true or should sometimes depart from this principle to promote national unity.

Certain views on the remainder of the issues have seemed to the writer to be implicit in his discussions bearing upon what history content can do within the experience of students.

Those of Schlesinger's writings which have seemed to the writer to bear directly or indirectly upon the issues raised in this study are as follows:

New Viewpoints in American History. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1925.

Paths to the Present. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1949.

Political and Social Growth of the American People. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941.

Political and Social History of the United States, 1829-1925. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1929.

The Rise of Modern America, 1865-1951. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1951.

The Rise of the United States as a World Power. Leiden: Universitaire Pers Leiden, 1948.

"What American Social History Is," Education Digest, April, 1937, pp. 63-4.

"History: Mistress or Handmaid," in Essays on Research in the Social Sciences. Washington: Brookings Institution, 1931.

Introduction to Herbert Ingram Priestley's The Coming of the White Man with Dixon Ryan Fox. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1929.

Schlesinger's views on whether, how, why, to whom, and by whom history should be taught in the schools and on what should be taught under the rubric of history may be summarized as follows:

#### Whether

1. He is obviously convinced of the usefulness of history to the general population, but does not deal with the question of whether history should be studied in the schools.

How

1. He makes clear his support of the view that history teachers and textbook writers should present subject matter for the consideration of students on the basis of what has been found to be true. And he opposes the idea of distorting events for the purpose of building national unity.

Why

He claims that knowledge of history

1. promotes a clearer understanding of present situations and problems than would otherwise be possible,
2. furnishes inspiration,
3. equips Americans for interpreting the American story to people of other lands, and
4. is worthwhile for its own sake.

To whom

1. Without specifying where the knowledge should be gained, he expresses the belief that all of the people of the United States should find out what the historians have had to say about the country's development.

By whom

1. The writer's method has not produced evidence that Schlesinger considers this question a matter warranting his consideration.

What

1. Writing with another author, he accepts the idea that studying the history of a limited area is meaningful only as the local scene is viewed in its larger historical setting.
2. His authorship of college textbooks suggests a belief on his part that the study of history as a separately organized subject is appropriate at least at the college level.
3. His contention that all citizens should become familiar with the scholars' scientific, up-to-date interpretations of United States history suggests that he certainly would not be unwilling to have these interpretations incorporated into the existent history curriculum in the schools.

## THE ISSUES

1. Should American youth study American history only or American history plus world or European history?

Those of Schlesinger's independent works examined by the writer make no direct comment on this issue. Schlesinger does indicate a belief in the importance of pointing up the international character of events presented in the study of American history. Collaborating with Dixon Ryan Fox as editor of the History of American Life series, Schlesinger subscribes to, or at least acquiesces in, the idea that studying local history becomes a meaningful avenue to understanding the contemporary local scene only as it is placed in its broader historical setting.



His prefatory remarks in the 1929 edition of his American history textbook for college use, Political and Social History of the United States, include both an elaboration of the thesis that events in the United States are inevitably related to or affected by events which have occurred or are occurring in other parts of the world and a commitment to the procedure of indicating the universal nature of the trends manifested in the development of America:

As Professor Haskins observed in the course of his presidential address to the American Historical Association in 1922, "Ireland has a potato famine in 1848, and Boston has an Irish mayor in 1922. Karl Marx and Engels publish their Communist Manifesto in this same 1848, and two generations later Bolshevism appears in the lumber camps of the Pacific Northwest." Indeed, the more one studies the history of the United States, the more one becomes convinced of the unity of all history. In reality, the . . . main currents of American development are, in no sense, peculiar to the United States, but were equally operative in the history of Western Europe during the same period. So far as space has permitted, an effort has been made to show the essentially international character of such significant movements, for example, as abolition, the extension of the suffrage, the consolidation of nationality, the efforts for universal peace, and the development of imperialism.<sup>1</sup>

This argument is far from a definite commitment to the idea that students should study world or European history as separate subjects. However, if Schlesinger believes that there is "unity in all history"--that what happens in one part of the world may have an eventual effect on others--, and if, in presenting American history, he is convinced of the importance of using as much time as possible to show that the

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1. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Political and Social History of the United States, 1829-1925. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1929, pp. viii-ix.

trends which are a part of the country's story are not uniquely American but manifest in various other nations, it seems reasonable to the writer to suppose that he at least would not oppose the study of world or European history. Such study, Schlesinger's argument implies, would add to the completeness of the students' picture of the contemporary scene in their own country by illustrating general tendencies common to the United States and other countries.

In an editors' foreword to Herbert Ingram Priestley's The Coming of the White Man, 1498-1848, Schlesinger and Dixon Ryan Fox say "comparison is the key to understanding." They offer and illustrate the idea that the student of local or national history must see the events of his subject in relation to comparable happenings in other lands if his study is to be meaningful:

In the broad view of the new world the history of the United States, despite our fond appropriation of the term "American," is only local history. This throws no doubt upon its value, for as the history of a village may exemplify the history of a nation, so that of a nation may exemplify the history of mankind. Biology, it may be observed, is mainly advanced by the scientist's examination of a single new bit of tissue under the microscope. But he can make this contribution largely because he knows the quality of other tissues and hence can realize the significance of what he sees. He has standards of comparison, and comparison is the key to understanding. All too often the student of local custom, and the same is almost as true of the historian of a nation, misses the meaning of what lies before him because he knows so little of how other human groups have acted in more or less similar circumstances. In this respect, probably, his readers are under even deeper disadvantage.<sup>2</sup>

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2. Herbert Ingram Priestley, The Coming of the White Man, History of American Life, Volume I, Dixon Ryan Fox and Arthur M. Schlesinger, editors. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1929, p. xvii.

This argument suggests the commitment of these authors to the proposition that knowledge of the development of other countries is indispensable to a clear understanding of the local present.<sup>3</sup> It follows that they would regard the study of the history of nations other than the United States as necessary to an understanding of the present local scene.

Although it may not be possible conclusively to establish the degree of commitment by either of two authors to statements signed jointly, it seems safe to say that Schlesinger accepts at least the idea that the student's understanding of the history of one country is enhanced by knowledge of the development of others, and that this is all to the good.

In summary, then, all the writer can say concerning Schlesinger's view on this issue is: He makes no explicit plea for the study in the schools of world or European history as separate subjects. He does indicate a belief in the desirability of pointing up the international aspects of trends noted in the study of American history. And he accepts the proposition that a clear understanding of local history is to a large degree dependent upon ability to compare local situations with those of other times and places.

2. Should history be required in the schools rather than merely made available?

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3. That Schlesinger is convinced of the desirability of understanding the current scene is demonstrated below, pp. 177-80.

The method of this study yielded no evidence as to Schlesinger's views on the question of requiring history in the schools.

3. Should the study of history be strongly urged for all students in the nation's schools or only for those who will be leaders?

The method of this study did not reveal direct consideration by Schlesinger of the issue concerning who should be encouraged to study history in the schools. However, at one point in his writing he has expressed the belief that all the citizens of the United States should learn somewhere or somehow what the historians have said about the nation's history. Writing in the 1925 edition of New Viewpoints in American History, he defends this belief on the ground that the widespread interest generated by World War I in the job of Americanizing various elements of the population had made knowledge of the American tradition important for the general population: "It seems unnecessary to say that the interest aroused by the World War in Americanization work makes it important that all citizens of the republic should learn what historians have to say about the past of their country: Americanization must begin at home."<sup>4</sup>

Schlesinger has made no plea here for the study of history in the schools by the generality of the people, but he has expressed a sentiment in favor of the acquisition of knowledge of history by all the people. It seems unlikely, therefore, that, if he urged the study of history in the schools at all, he would direct his plea only at those whom he might consider potential leaders.

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4. Arthur M. Schlesinger, New Viewpoints in American History, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1925, pp. viii-ix.

4. Should history be maintained in the school curriculum as an organized discipline, or should its content merely be employed in contributing to the understanding of social problems being studied under some other curricular arrangement?

Schlesinger's preparation of college history textbooks suggests that he considers the study of history as a separately organized subject to be suitable at the college level at least. He holds that knowledge of the past promotes insight into present situations and problems and provides inspiration. He does not deny that historical content may be studied within the framework of a current problem course. He does make clear in the following assertion his conviction that there is little value in studying the current scene without giving attention under some curricular arrangement to past events: ". . . . It [American history] helps to explain the present state of the nation; and it affords clues to the future. Youth has been known to cry, 'Let bygones be bygones!' . . . . But sooner or later young people come to realize that they are the heirs of a living tradition, that if they could succeed in blotting out the memory of their forebears, they would be like a ship without a rudder and compass."<sup>5</sup>

His preparation of Political and Social Growth of the American People, 1865-1940; Political and Social Growth of the United States, 1852-1933; The Rise of Modern America, 1865-1951; and other chronologically organized history textbooks for the use of college students

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5. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Political and Social Growth of the American People. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941, pp. v-vi.

strongly suggests a commitment on Schlesinger's part to the idea that the study of history as a separately organized subject, on the college level at least, is appropriate and desirable.

In his opening pages of The Rise of the United States as a World Power Schlesinger elaborates and illustrates the idea that knowledge of history may promote understanding of the trends and motivating forces which play upon the present scene as "a mere horizontal view of events" will not:

The first President of the Republic, George Washington, in his famous Farewell Address, counseled his countrymen against becoming involved in "the ordinary combinations and collisions" of European states or in "permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world." In the century and more that followed, this sentiment became so deep-rooted as to become almost a national religion. As recently as twenty-eight years ago the United States Senate refused to join the League of Nations which President Wilson had done so much to inspire. Yet, even more recently, in 1945, the United States led all countries in adhering to the United Nations which a later President had helped to create, and the capital of the new world system has been established in the United States. What kept the American people so long in their isolationist shell, and what caused them at last to leave it?

The student of history, unlike the journalist, cannot seek the explanation in a mere horizontal view of events. Exclusive concern with the contemporary scene may hide more truth than it reveals. Rather, the historian takes a vertical view, believing that a knowledge of the past will disclose national interests, ideals and tendencies that underlie the present and betoken the future.<sup>6</sup>

Although the point does not attack Schlesinger's central argument, it has been the writer's experience that competent journalists, as well

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6. Arthur M. Schlesinger, The Rise of the United States as a World Power. Leiden: Universitaire Pers Leiden, 1948, pp. 3-4.

as historians, seek explanations in past events of questions so obviously rooted in history as the one illustrated above.

In the section on history in the Brookings Institution's Essays on Research in the Social Sciences, Schlesinger emphasizes once more the belief that the perspective afforded by historical study is necessary both for social scientists and for laymen if they are to understand clearly "how we came to be as we are":

No individual, least of all a social scientist, can wisely ignore the long reach of the past. History, by liberating him from the prison of the past, reveals social life in a dual perspective of time and space. It enormously enlarges his range of observed phenomena, affords a sense of the mutability of institutions, and suggests the conditioning factors in contemporary life. Too often the social scientist who is applying his microscope to the complexities of present-day culture forgets that he is, in reality, studying merely a transitory cross-section of an evolving structure. Though today is different from yesterday, it was shaped by yesterday. The current farm problem, the prohibition situation, and the anomalous state of our political parties are all rooted in conditions and forces long in operation, and cannot helpfully be analyzed by students who blithely cry, "Let bygones be bygones."<sup>7</sup>

If students are to understand clearly current institutions and trends, Schlesinger is saying in effect, they must become familiar with the conditions in the past out of which these institutions and trends grew. Thus, according to this view, the work of a social studies class focusing on current problems such as those involved in the fields of public health and education and in labor-management relations would not result in any very sharp insights on the part of students unless

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7. The Brookings Institution, Essays on Research in the Social Sciences, Arthur M. Schlesinger, "History: Mistress or Handmaid," Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1931, p. 154.

they were able to acquire in the process some knowledge of the historical background of these problems.

Dealing more specifically with American history, Schlesinger claims that knowledge of their country's past enables citizens to perform a new task created by new conditions. The increase in the world responsibility of America and the concomitant increase in world travel by Americans have made it necessary for travelling citizens of the United States to be interpreters of their nation's traditions to citizens of other countries, he asserts:

Everyone recognizes the importance of a knowledge of the past for a better understanding of the present. . . . The reason for reading and studying United States history is as compelling as ever, but it has recently been reinforced by a new and equally vital one: the need to interpret America's ideals to other peoples. Americans have always moved freely over the face of the United States; now, with the nation obliged to shoulder global responsibilities, they are moving almost as freely over the face of the earth. If they are ill-informed about their country's history, they cannot properly represent its great traditions or help make America's influence count everywhere for peace, human rights and economic improvement.<sup>8</sup>

Within the argument above Schlesinger's references to the reasons for "reading and studying" United States history as "compelling" and "vital" could be construed as evidence of a conviction on his part that history should be maintained in the school curriculum as a separately organized subject. He does not, however, actually assert such a conviction. Nor does he explicitly deny that the "American

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8. Arthur M. Schlesinger, The Rise of Modern America, 1865-1951. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1951, p. v.



heritage" could be learned within the framework of a current problems course.

Without claiming a perfect record for the forebears of modern Americans, Schlesinger, writing again about American history, sees the true story of the United States as a source of inspiration to those studying it. The efforts of the American people to build a fair and equitable way of life, he says, should prevent those who know the story from abandoning their efforts:

The history of the American people has been beaten out on the anvil of experience. The story reveals both failures and successes, confused aims and clearness of direction, ruthless self-seeking and disinterested devotion. . . . Yet the record as a whole sums up a people who, despite the ills to which mankind is prey, managed to fashion a way of life and system of government which at every period of American history served as a beacon light for struggling humanity everywhere. So viewed, the story is one of ceaseless effort and unflinching idealism. He who drinks at the springs of the American past will never resign himself to injustice or inequality of opportunity, to intolerance or corruption, to the cruelty of man to man, any more than the scientist resigns himself to the existence of diseases supposedly incurable.<sup>9</sup>

This claim, too, with its allusion to the inspirational powers involved in the process of "drinking at the springs of the American past," could be interpreted as a plea for history as a separate subject in the school curriculum. As has been true earlier, however, he has not specified the curricular arrangement under which knowledge of the American heritage should be acquired.

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9. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Political and Social Growth of the American People, pp. v-vi.

In summary, Schlesinger takes the position that it is important for students to acquire knowledge of historical content on these grounds:

- 1) Such knowledge promotes necessary insight into present situations and problems;
- 2) familiarity with the American tradition equips America's unofficial "travelling ambassadors" for the jobs of interpreting the American heritage to other peoples and of furthering "peace, human rights, and economic improvement"; and,
- 3) knowledge of the history of America affords inspiration to students.

There is a clear suggestion that he thinks it at least appropriate that the subject of history as a separate course be offered on the college level; but his writing gives no clear indication concerning his stand on the advisability of incorporating historical content into a current problems course.

5. Are controversial issues best understood by pursuing a chronological study of history which reveals their past forms clearly and to some extent outlines their present forms; or are they best understood by a direct consideration of the current aspects of the issues with historical background brought in only when it is clearly necessary for understanding?

Schlesinger's idea, discussed in the preceding section, that knowledge of history is necessary to a clear understanding of present problems and situations surely would apply to controversial issues, since such issues are subordinated within the category current problems. This idea does not specify, however, by what method history content should be brought to bear upon current problems. It is useful in clarifying his stand on the issue presently under discussion, therefore,

only as it makes the point that this historian would insist on history's being brought in at some time in any consideration of any controversial issue if the purpose of such consideration was to promote the clearest understanding possible.

Examination of his writings failed to yield any specific reference to the possible merits the practice of emphasizing direct consideration of the current aspects of controversial issues might have in promoting the most comprehensive understanding of those issues.

In summary, then, the only assertion that can be made safely about Schlesinger's view on this issue is that he thinks knowledge of historical content is necessary to gaining the clearest possible insight into controversial topics. For what it is worth, it may be added that Schlesinger deals historically with such topics as social class and economic practices, both fairly controversial matters. But this may mean simply that Schlesinger is a historian rather than a sociologist or economist.

6. Is history most effectively learned by starting with a detailed study of a limited period or area or by beginning with a general survey of a broad area or time span?
7. Should young students become familiar with the content of history through casual and unorganized experiences before attempting a systematic study of history?

Examination of Schlesinger's writings yielded no reference by this historian to these issues.

8. Should the history teacher or the writer of history textbooks rigorously confine himself to material he has found to be true, or should he sometimes depart from this principle for the purpose of strengthening the loyalty of people to their country or of unifying them?

Schlesinger is both clear and specific on this issue. He not only supports the view that purveyors of history content are obligated to present what they have found to be true; he also actively attacks the idea of presenting a distorted picture of events to students in the name of promoting national loyalty.

His concern that the generality of the people (which obviously includes those who study history in the schools) come to know what the historians now believe to be true of the development of America as a result of recent research, he asserts, motivated the writing of a complete book, New Viewpoints in American History:

Most adult Americans of today gained their knowledge of American history before the present generation of historians had made perceptible progress in their epoch-making work of reconstructing the story of our past in the light of their new studies and investigations. . . . American history which had formerly been envisaged as a record of arid political and constitutional development, began to be enriched by the new conceptions and fresh points of view afforded by the scientific study of economics, sociology, and politics. . . . Historians began to view the past of America with broadened vision and to attain the power of seeing familiar facts in new relationships. . . .

Unfortunately the product of the new school of American historians has been buried in the files of historical society journals, in the learned publications and in monographs. . . . The public generally has remained oblivious of the great revolution in our knowledge of American history wrought by the research specialists. Even the school textbooks have not until a comparatively recent time been affected by the discoveries of the specialists; and too often the newer type textbook has suffered at the hands of teachers who, though familiar

with the new facts and emphases as set forth in the textbook, have no acquaintance with the general point of view which gives to these facts their tremendous significance.

The object of the present work is to bring together and summarize in non-technical language some of the results of the researches of the present era of historical study and to show their importance to a proper understanding of American history.<sup>10</sup>

In his efforts in the book under discussion to acquaint the generality of the people with what the historians have found to be true about the development of America, Schlesinger deals with particular facets of the history of the republic which illustrate the researchers' new findings. He touches upon such aspects of the American story as geographic and economic influences in American history, radicalism and conservatism in American history, the significance of Jacksonian democracy, the development of the states' rights doctrine, and the role of women in American history. Many of the "new viewpoints" outlined by Schlesinger call into question beliefs that have been perpetuated by school textbooks. Some of these beliefs seem likely to bear sharply upon the feelings of loyalty to country of those holding them.

For example, Schlesinger asserts that the average American still (1925) accepts without qualification or question the partisan justifications of the struggle for independence which have come down from the actual participants in the affair on the American side. These accounts, colored by the emotions and misunderstandings of the times and designed

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10. Arthur M. Schlesinger, New Viewpoints in American History, pp. vii-viii.

to arouse the colonists to a warlike pitch against the British government, have formed the basis of the treatments in our school textbooks and have served to perpetuate judgments of the American Revolution which no fair-minded historian can accept today. Indeed, Schlesinger points out, many Americans of the present generation who readily admit that there is much to be said for the Southern side in the Civil War condemn as unpatriotic any effort to consider the origins of the War for Independence from a standpoint of scientific historical detachment. Yet, he reports, if the period from 1760 to 1776 is not viewed merely as the prelude to the American Revolution, the military struggle, honestly appraised, was a war to dismember the British empire, an armed attempt to impose the views of the revolutionists upon the British government and a large section of the population at whatever cost to freedom of opinion or the sanctity of life and property. The major emphasis in a scientific analysis must fall, he suggests, upon the clash of economic interests and the interplay of mutual prejudices, opposing ideals and personal antagonisms--whether in England or America--which made inevitable in 1776 what was unthinkable in 1760.<sup>11</sup>

The preceding example makes clear Schlesinger's awareness of the role textbooks may play in re-enforcing often in the supposed interest of promoting national loyalty ideas which scholars no longer accept and his conviction that it is important to acquaint the general population with the newer findings of the historians in these areas.

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11. Ibid., pp. 160-62.

Moving into the classroom, Schlesinger specifically attacks nationalistic textbooks which have emphasized conflicts between nations and have neglected to show how much countries have to and do rely on each other. He makes his objection on the ground that the one-sided accounts of these books affect student attitudes on international relations. These distorted works, he thinks, make students distrustful of other countries and leave them unable to resist strong emotional appeals in time of emergency:

The traditional histories, written consciously or unconsciously in the interest of political nationalism, now magnified the differences between countries and ignored their fundamental interdependence. If only wars and diplomatic controversies are worth the telling, if pupils never hear of foreign countries except when the United States has a quarrel with one of them, it is little wonder that youthful minds imbibe the notion that other nations count in our lives only as trouble makers. With such indoctrination in the schools, is it any wonder that, when an international crisis looms, the American people are so susceptible to high-powered propaganda?<sup>12</sup>

Implicit in the foregoing argument is a belief in the proposition that it is desirable for American citizens to be capable of scrutinizing critically any version of an event, of recognizing such a version as propaganda when it is, and of rejecting such propaganda. He warns that presenting distorted accounts of events instead of true ones has an effect opposite from that of fostering the skills or the habits involved in examining ideas and presentations critically.

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12. Arthur M. Schlesinger, "What American Social History Is," Education Digest (April, 1937), p. 64.

Schlesinger's commitment to the idea that materials dealing with international relations should be accurate both in factual content and in emphasis is illustrated in his comments on world and American history in Paths to the Present. Here he shows concern about the ultranationalistic attitudes promoted by undue emphasis on national differences in conventional histories.

History as conventionally written stresses national differences--even when not genuinely such--to the neglect of national similarities. This emphasis, glossing over the fundamental interdependence of peoples, inevitably highlights the occasional misunderstandings and collisions, nourishes mutual distrust and contributes dangerously to national vain-glory. In the case of the United States, for example, Great Britain is impressed upon the young as a selfish ruler of the colonies, an enemy in two wars and a diplomatic antagonist on numerous occasions. Germany hardly figures at all in American histories until under Kaiser Wilhelm II, and again under Adolf Hitler, she emerges as a monster of ruthlessness. The existence of three thousand miles of unfortified boundary with Canada receives the barest mention, but America's tempestuous neighbor to the south gets full and invidious attention. In other words, the scholars through whose writings the living generation learns of the past have compiled case studies of abnormal and exceptional behavior, and historians in other countries have done a like disservice from their points of view.<sup>13</sup>

As early as 1925, Schlesinger sounded an optimistic note concerning a change in the conception of patriotism in the United States, a change away from the use of history content as propaganda for strongly nationalist attitudes. At that same time, he produced a concise account of his view on the issue under discussion. Subsequently, as

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13. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Paths to the Present. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1949, p. 185.



the two preceding excerpts from his work demonstrate, he seems to have found his optimism to be unwarranted, but, apparently, he did not find reason to change his basic view presented in the 1920's as follows that history teachers and textbook writers should present the facts as they know them to students:

Fortunately, our conception of patriotism is undergoing revision, for Germany has taught us the danger of teaching propaganda in the guise of history, and the teacher and writer of history today is charged with the responsibility of being as scrupulously fair to other nations as to the United States in dealing with the subject of American history.<sup>14</sup>

The writer takes Schlesinger's reference to the lesson learned from Germany to mean that prior to World War I Germans were taught a one-sided version of history which caused them to glorify their own country and to distrust others, and that the beliefs fostered by German propaganda dressed-up-like-history were such as to make their holders receptive to war.

Briefly, then, Schlesinger's position on the issue under discussion seems to be this: history teachers and textbook writers should present what they have found to be true and should refrain from propagandizing in the name of history. He takes this position apparently because of a belief that if history instruction is otherwise, people will become susceptible to propaganda and will fail to understand and appreciate other countries.

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14. Arthur M. Schlesinger, New Viewpoints in American History, p. 160.

9. Should history be studied for its own sake as well as for the purpose of throwing light on the current scene?

Schlesinger specifies clearly that he believes history is worth studying for its own sake, although he does not make equally clear the grounds upon which his belief rests.

In Political and Social Growth of the American People, he points out three possible reasons for studying American history. One of these is that the history of the United States "is worth knowing for its own sake."<sup>15</sup> (Since the methodology of historiographers and historians writing in the field of American history are not unique, and since Schlesinger gives no indication of a belief that American history content has an intrinsic value not to be found in the subject matter of other fields of history, the writer assumes this idea is applicable to the history of other parts of the world, too.)

In the absence of any elaboration, what is meant by "worth knowing for its own sake" becomes a matter for conjecture. The writer supposes Schlesinger may mean that knowledge of history may be a source of enjoyment or satisfaction to an individual without regard to its serving any instrumental purpose such as "illuminating the present."

10. Should the preparation of teachers in the field of history consist principally of pedagogical training or of instruction in the subject field to be taught?

Examination of Schlesinger's writings yielded no comment by the historian on this issue.

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15. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Political and Social Growth of the American People, p. v.

11. Should the nature of the history curriculum in the schools be decided by specialists in the field of education, or should such decisions be made primarily by historians?

The method of this study revealed no opinion by Schlesinger on this issue as formulated. His concern that all the American people should become acquainted with the "new viewpoints" in American history based on recent research by trained historians<sup>16</sup> suggests that he considers it entirely appropriate for individual historians to try to influence the history curriculum.

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16. Supra, p. 175.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE VIEWS OF ALLAN NEVINS (1890- ) ON ISSUES BEARING UPON THE TEACHING OF HISTORY

#### INTRODUCTION

Allan Nevins has written extensively about many of the issues in the field of history-education that are the basis of the organization of this study. He has taken some position, either explicitly or implicitly on all but one of them--the issue concerning the relative merits of introducing students to history content through casual contact with it or through a systematic study of the subject.

He has been most explicit on two issues: the requirement of history in the schools and the relative merits of retaining history as a separate, logically organized subject, as against merely using history content in general social studies or current problems courses. He has been least direct in his comments on the training of history teachers.

The publications from which Nevins' views have been drawn follow:

Allan Nevins, The Gateway to History. Boston: D. C. Heath Company, 1938.

"American History for Americans," The New York Times Magazine (May 3, 1942), pp. 6 and 28.

"To Take the Poison Out of Textbooks," The New York Times Magazine (February 23, 1947), pp. 7, 63-4

"Tyrannies Must Fall," Colliers, Volume 128  
(October 20, 1951), pp. 16-19 and 78-82.

"What About Us and the British?" The New York Times Magazine (October 25, 1942), pp. 8 and 37.

"What's the Matter with History?" Saturday Review of Literature, Volume 19 (February 4, 1939), pp. 3, 4 and 16.

"Why We Should Know Our History," The New York Times Magazine (April 18, 1943), pp. 16 and 25.

Nevins' general position on whether, how, why, to whom, and by whom history should be taught and what should be taught under the title of "History" or instead of it may be outlined as follows:

#### Whether

1. He has said that American history, at least, should be required in the nation's schools.

#### How

1. He maintains that the study of history should be a thorough and detailed study of a considerable civilization.
2. He supports the position that only in countries which are unified may the history studied by youth always be accurate whether it promotes national loyalty and unity or not.

#### Why

1. The study of history, he argues, allows a better understanding of the present scene than would be possible without it; it develops such qualities as wisdom and tolerance; and it promotes

loyalty to country. It may also bring enjoyment and appreciation of the past, according to Nevins.

To Whom

1. He says that history (of the United States, at least) should be taught to all the youth of the country.

By Whom

1. He implies that those who are not "extremists" and who will preserve the separate identity of history should serve as the teachers in the history classes of the nation.

What

1. He takes the view that the study of history as a separate, logically developed subject should be maintained in the school curriculum.
2. He defends the study of world and European history on the ground that such study promotes ability to carry on effective relations with other countries and allows the formulation of broad generalizations which are instrumental in handling current social problems intelligently.

## THE ISSUES

1. Should American youth study American history only or American history plus world or European history?

Allan Nevins has indicated both in direct statements and by implication that he believes the youth of this country should study other history in addition to American history. His most explicit (but not most elaborate) assertion of his view on this issue, occurs, oddly enough, in a magazine article which is mainly a defense of the study of American history. In a protest against the tendency on the part of some educators to minimize distinctions between subjects like American and world history, Nevins, in addition to pleading for the study of American history, says that "courses in world history are more than ever indispensable now that the last defenses of isolationists are crumbling away."<sup>1</sup> A reason for studying world history which seems to be implied in Nevins' statement is this: ours is an interdependent world in which the people of the United States are affected by developments in other countries, and in such a world it is necessary for the people of this nation to understand the backgrounds of other countries if adequate decisions about problems and issues arising out of international relations are to be made. Apart from some such interpretation, the quoted sentence is simply a glaring non sequitur.

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1. Allan Nevins, "Why We Should Know Our History," The New York Times Magazine (April 18, 1943), pp. 16, 25.

In part of a discussion on the utility of reading history, Nevins points up, in effect, some of the specific understandings he believes to be outcomes of reading world or European history. He seems to claim that comprehension of 1) the basic differences in the psychologies and traditions of the various nations as they are compared and of 2) the relationship between institutions and the backgrounds of the nations in which they occur depends on a knowledge of history.

Nevins' argument is that people who do not read history fail to comprehend how the nations differ from each other and consequently do not understand the behavior of their representatives in the conduct of world affairs. Those who do not read history, he says, seldom realize that the institutions which work satisfactorily in one nation may fail to function successfully in another. His own well-illustrated elaboration of the preceding argument follows:

People who read little history seldom comprehend. . . . how greatly the different nations of men differ--how widely the average psychology of the Spaniard diverges from the average psychology of the Russian; or how much variation there is between different human types within the same nation. They are therefore nonplused by the extreme divergences of motive, the apparent eccentricities of conduct often displayed in world affairs. They seldom realize, in consequence, that the institution which in one nation proves highly successful may be a calamity in another. Parliamentary institutions work well in the various nations of the British commonwealth but almost nowhere else. The presidential system of government has on the whole served the United States admirably, but south of the Rio Grande it has been an easy stepping-stone to dictatorships.<sup>2</sup>

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2. Allan Nevins, Gateway to History. Boston: D. C. Heath Company, 1938, p. 378.



Although Nevins does not specify that by history he means World history, his references to Spain, Russia, and South America seem to the writer to offer sufficient warrant for the judgment that world history must be meant. He does not specifically claim that people who do read history will gain understanding about differences between nations. He says merely that people who do not study history seldom gain these understandings. But in view of the context in which he is enumerating various utilities accruing from a sustained reading of history, it is fair to infer that he expects reading of history to bring increased comprehension of differences among nations and their institutions.

The idea developed above is concretely illustrated by Nevins in a magazine article written during the Second World War. In "What about Us and the British?" Nevins discusses the lack of accurate knowledge on the part of the people of Great Britain and the United States about each other's history. And he points out how important it is for the two countries, allies who are inescapably dependent upon each other, to maintain amicable relations. He suggests, then, that more accurate knowledge on the part of the people of each of these countries about the history of the other could lead to better understanding and, in turn, to effective international relations:

The defect of the American stereotype of Britain is that it is out of date by a full generation; the defect of the British stereotype of America is that it is all too falsely up to date. We think of Britain too much in terms of one side of her history; the British think of us without enough attention to our history--for they hardly know we have any. . . .

How, whispers the misinformed Briton to himself, can so crude, violent and boastful a people make dependable allies? How, asks the misled American, can a land honey combed with Jeames Yellowplush caste and enfeebled by vicarage tea be a virile fighting partner? . . . .

It is important for Americans to learn more about the Britain that has come into existence since Lloyd George blazed into radical leadership before the First World War. The more they know about this newer England and Scotland, with its multiplex experiments, its thirst for reform and its rising standard of living in the face of adverse conditions, the less they will be apt to think of Britain as stuffy and lethargic.

Conversely, it is important for the British to learn more about the American past. Once they comprehend that we have a long and dignified history--political, social, and cultural--they can put transient modern blemishes into proper perspective. . . .

America could suffer no external calamity so great as the destruction or enfeeblement of Britain, Britain could suffer no external calamity so great as the crippling or estrangement of America. . . . Nations so mutually indispensable ought to cure the worst shortcomings in their knowledge of each other.<sup>3</sup>

One further reason for studying World or European history suggested by Nevins is that such study allows the formulation of broadly based generalizations which are helpful tools in dealing with current social problems. In a magazine article in 1951 concerning the probable downfall of the communist dictatorship, he demonstrates this idea, although he does not state it directly.

In an article "Tyrannies Must Fall," he takes it for granted that generalizations may be drawn from the study of history, and he uses a number of generalizations to support his argument that history shows

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3. Allan Nevins, "What about Us and the British?" The New York Times Magazine (October 25, 1942), p. 37.

the likelihood of the downfall of the Soviet dictatorship. The generalizations used, such as, "No power ever succeeded in holding in permanent subjection a chain of satellite countries," fall within the field of international relations and, therefore, cannot be drawn from the study of only one country. In the course of the article, Nevins implies clearly that knowledge of such generalizations as the ones described helps those who know them to understand the nature of present problems and to anticipate further developments concerning them. Therefore, Nevins suggests, the study of World (or European) history promotes a fuller understanding of current problems than a study of only American history will allow. The following outline account of Nevins' argument concerning the fate of the communist dictatorship, the writer believes, illustrates this proposition:

In his discussion of the likelihood of the downfall of the Soviet dictatorship, he says that the free world's confidence in a coming Russian revolution is based on plain historical facts and established historical principles. He says every lesson of history has taught that for several reasons such a tyrannical system as that of the Soviet Union must in no long time undergo a sharp transformation. History has proven, he claims, that no government and system can subjugate all Europe, much less the whole globe. He cites, then, unsuccessful attempts of such men as Louis XIV, Napoleon and Hitler to bring all Europe under subjection.<sup>4</sup>

A second reason for confidence in a Russian Revolution which history shows is this: no power ever succeeded in holding in permanent subjection a chain of satellite countries as Russia is doing. And he presents as evidence supporting

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4. Allan Nevins, "Tyrannies Must Fall," Collier's, Volume 128 (October 20, 1951), p. 17.

this generalization stories of the establishment of national independence by such former subject countries as Belgium and Hungary.<sup>5</sup>

An additional lesson of history to give confidence in the destruction of the Soviet dictatorship is that no attempt (like that represented by the iron curtain which is so essential to the Soviet regime) to prevent the entry of ideas from other lands has ever been successful. As support for this generalization, he cites such examples as the futile attempts of the French Bourbons to keep out the enlightenment and of Philip II of Spain to crush freedom of thought.<sup>6</sup>

A last lesson of history which points to the Soviet dictatorship's downfall is that no regime has ever lasted unless it had the power of self-criticism and self-reform. And he cites Louis XIV's arbitrary system of justice as a manifestation of that lack of power of self-criticism and reform.<sup>7</sup>

Apparently, lest his claims outlined above be construed as prophecy, he points out that prophecy is always dangerous and is especially dangerous about so inscrutable a land as Russia. But, in defense of his position, he asserts, "We can say that unless all the lights of history are misleading, the Soviet dictatorship is on the highroad to revolution and ruin."<sup>8</sup>

His failure to specify more clearly the length of time involved in each of his generalizations perhaps could bring the charge of vagueness against Nevins' formulations. And the truth of some of the generalizations, the writer supposes, could be challenged. For example,

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5. Ibid., pp. 18-19.

6. Ibid., p. 79.

7. Ibid., p. 81.

8. Ibid., pp. 81-2.

his claim (which specifies no particular time span within which the generalization operates) that history has proven no government and system can subjugate all Europe or the whole globe may be called into question by citing the control exercised over the civilized world for centuries by the Roman Empire. However, these possible weaknesses in his formulations of the particular generalizations that have been discussed, and which he probably could defend by elaborating his meaning, do not invalidate the implicit idea running through his whole argument--the ability to formulate generalizations which comes from the study of world history promotes understanding of current problems.

If the writer's interpretation of the implications of Nevins' writings bearing on the issue under discussion are correct, it may be said that he would advocate the study of world and/or European history in addition to American history on the following grounds:

- 1) The study of the history of lands other than our own which provides information about their traditions and institutions promotes an understanding of the nations studied which in turn contributes to ability to carry on effective international relations; and,
- 2) the study of world or European history permits the formulation of broadly based generalizations which serve as helpful to tools in handling current social problems intelligently.

2. Should history be required rather than merely made available?

Nevins' views on the possible outcomes of the study of world or European history indicate that he certainly would reserve a place in the curriculum for the history of other lands. And his statement that "courses in world history are more than ever indispensable now that the last defenses of isolationists are crumbling away"<sup>9</sup> strongly suggest he would require such courses. As for his stand on requiring American history in the schools of the nation, he makes emphatically clear his view that American youth should be required to learn American history.

A few months after the entry of the United States into the Second World War, Nevins wrote an article for a popular magazine expressing concern about the unity of the people of the country and pointing out that knowledge of the nation's history is important to the achievement of unity. In the article, he deplores the lack of a basic set of requirements in American history in the schools of the nation and he asserts that a basic set of requirements in our schools is needed and that a good advanced course, which might or might not be compulsory, ought to be offered in the arts colleges.

The fact is that our educational requirements in American history and government have been and are deplorably haphazard, chaotic, and ineffective. . . . Twenty-six states demand some school instruction in American history; twenty-two states require none. And even the conscientious ~~twenty-six~~ are often vague and unexact. . . . A basic set of requirements is needed. Indeed, little doubt exists that a double requirement is essential. The lower school should offer a thorough elementary

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9. Supra, p. 194.

course. . . . divorced from social studies, cosmic history, and like fetters. The arts colleges should offer a good general course of advanced nature, and it would be refreshing to see some of them experiment in making it compulsory, while others gave it more prominence.<sup>10</sup>

Nevins' use of the word offer in connection with the proposed school requirement of history could raise doubts about whether he would actually demand instruction in American history for the students of the nation's schools. However, his reference to the state of statutory regulations concerning American history as deplorably haphazard, chaotic, and ineffective indicate that he must have intended the meaning require when he said the lower school should offer a thorough elementary course.

Nevins' concern about the unity and patriotism of the people of the nation and his feeling that patriotism "in the best sense of the word," that is, patriotism involving a feeling of proud comradeship, depends upon knowledge of the past were important considerations that prompted his claim that history be required, as the quotation below demonstrates:

One of the primary questions it [the war] has raised concerns the patriotism and unity of the country. An important collateral question deals with the extent and effectiveness of our education in American history. No nation can be patriotic in the best sense, so people can feel a proud comradeship, without a knowledge of the past. The Army camps are hastily organizing classes in historical instruction. Our press is full of references to the devotion and heroism shown in former crises.<sup>11</sup>

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10. Allan Nevins, "American History for Americans," The New York Times Magazine (May 3, 1942), p. 6.

11. Ibid., p. 6.

If the people of the country are to be unified, then, according to Nevins, a knowledge of their tradition is necessary. Knowledge of the country's tradition might reasonably include knowledge of such topics as the nation's past heroes and their deeds, its former aspirations and ideals and its attempts to attain them, and the growth of its respected institutions. Such knowledge is necessary, Nevins' writing suggests, because it leads to a feeling of proud comradeship among the people. And his coupling the problem of national unity with that of requiring history in the schools in a single discussion is indicative of a belief on his part that necessary knowledge of the nation's tradition is most likely to be acquired if American history is required in our schools.

One further warrant for requiring American history in the schools is indicated in "American History for Americans." In times of crisis, such as the period of the Second World War, Nevins contends, a thorough and accurate knowledge of the nation's past, which is a creditable record, is necessary in order that the people may be inspired to a faith in the present and hope for the future. And he adds that the lack of formal requirements for assuring that inspiration calls for investigation and action.

In these grim times, as we rally to a task that will strain every nerve and sinew, we must re-examine the sources of our moral and spiritual strength. A thorough, accurate and intelligent knowledge of our national past--in so many ways the brightest national record in all world history--is the best ground for faith in the present and hope for the future. That half of the states should have little or no formal requirement for tapping this fountain of inspiration; that more than half the graduates



of our colleges and universities should be graduated without drinking at its rim--this is a subject for inquiry, reproach, and action.<sup>12</sup>

Putting Nevins' contention into concrete terms, the kind of inspiration provided by such an example of courage as that of the much maligned and opposed Lincoln as he vigorously prosecuted the Civil War and as he proposed a humane reconstruction is ample warrant for the requirement of American history in the nation's schools.

Nevins' reasons for taking the position that American history should be required in the nation's schools, as presented in the preceding discussions, are these:

1. the study of American history promotes the kind of patriotism involving a feeling of proud comradeship on the part of the people who know the nation's tradition, and this comradeship leads to national unity; and,
2. the study of American history inspires that faith in the country and its future which leads to great effort in times of crisis.

As subsequent discussions in this chapter will show, the general consideration of the requirement of American history does not exhaust Nevins' ideas on what American history may be expected to do within the experience of students.

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12. Ibid., p. 18.

3. Should the study of history be strongly urged for all students in the nation's schools or only for those who are expected to become "leaders"?

Nevins' exposition of the various significant uses of knowledge of world and European history which was presented earlier in this chapter tempts the writer to hazard the guess that he would urge the study of the history of other lands for all students in the nation's schools. But, in none of the sources yielded by the method of this study does he explicitly state that all students should enroll in World or European history courses. As for American history, he has taken a firm stand in favor of requiring it in all schools. He spells out his position on this issue even more specifically in an article written for The New York Times in 1943. Public and professional interest in the study of American history had been aroused at that time by the Times survey which had revealed on the part of college freshmen a marked lack of information in some areas of American history. First deploring the deficiency of knowledge revealed by the survey, he turns his attention to high school students (and especially to those who drop out early) and to their American history opportunities. He points out that it is in the last two years of high school in which most of the really effective instruction in American history is given and that a veritable army of youngsters have to quit school before they reach these last two years. According to Nevins, they may or may not have been given some American history in the seventh and eighth grades. He cites Bulletin No. 6 of the Federal Bureau of Education,

1938, to the effect that one-fourth of the pupils covered in a broad survey were not taking American history in either grade.<sup>13</sup> Some educators deny, he continues, that the quantity of American history offerings in our schools is deficient. By way of refuting that denial he quotes the aforementioned Bulletin to the effect that nearly one-seventh of the potential registration in the last two years of high school was not taking history there. And these are the years, he claims, in which high school history is usually offered. It is unquestionably true, he says, that many students can and do leave school at sixteen with no American history worthy of the name. Admitting more facts to be needed on the question of quantity of American history instruction in the schools, he suggests that one conclusion probably can still be set down as fairly clear: that the American history course which most high schools reserve for juniors and seniors should be moved up to the first two years for the benefit of those who leave at sixteen or earlier.<sup>14</sup>

His support of the idea of American history for all the youth of the country is based on his belief that knowledge of the history of this country is an important factor in providing necessary citizenship and moral training:

The merely utilitarian value of American history may not be great, but a knowledge of it is indispensable training for the best type of American citizenship; while a reverence for

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13. Allan Nevins, "Why We Should Know Our History," The New York Times Magazine (April 18, 1943), p. 16.

14. Ibid., p. 16.

the American past, a due regard for our fundamental national ideals and the leaders who have embodied them, are equally important for the right moral training of young people.<sup>15</sup>

Nevins' statement is not sufficiently elaborated to furnish clues concerning the ways he thinks knowledge of American history contributes to the "best type of American citizenship." His assertion that reverence for the American past--its ideals and leaders--are important for the moral training of youth, however, suggests that such reverence (which is necessarily dependent upon knowledge of the country's past) may be expected to engender attempts on the part of the country's youth to live by the ideals and to cultivate the traits which have inspired this reverence for the past in the first place.

Nevins would urge the study of this country's history for all its youth, then, on grounds that such study is necessary to effective citizenship and moral training.

4. Should history be maintained in the school curriculum as an organized discipline or should its content merely be employed in contributing to the understanding of social problems being studied under some other curricular arrangement?

Allan Nevins' writings bearing upon this issue indicate that he thinks there are unique educative possibilities in the study of history and that he believes history as an organized discipline should be maintained in the school curriculum independent of problems courses or the other social studies.

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15. Ibid., p. 25.

In 1938, defending the study of history against the charge that it is a dead field concerning itself with the lifeless past, he points out and illustrates that the present cannot be understood without information about earlier times:

To a far greater degree than in the more placid Victorian days they [modern men] are prone to feel that history is a dead field, that it concerns itself with a lifeless past, and that for purposes of earnest, living men it is often useless enough to deserve Henry Ford's epithet--"bunk". . . .

This is of course a temporary attitude; but even if evanescent, it is unjust to history. The political present, the economic present, the sociological present, cannot be understood without knowledge of the past. . . . Who can understand Nazi Germany without knowing something of Germany of the Weimar Constitution, Germany of the Kaisers, and back of that the Germany of Jena and Leipzig? Who can understand Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal without studying Woodrow Wilson's New Freedom, the elder Roosevelt's New Nationalism, and back of that the democratic ideals of Lincoln, Jackson, and Jefferson? The more exigent the present day the more exigent also the past, for they are indissolubly united.<sup>16</sup>

Present day occurrences, then, according to Nevins, have their roots in the past, and to understand them fully necessitates a knowledge of their antecedents.

A further reason advanced by Nevins for gaining knowledge of history, closely allied to that of understanding the past, is that such knowledge throws the present into perspective, thus allowing a more clear and calm view of current happenings than would be possible without knowledge of similar phenomena of other times and places:

A knowledge of history is needed. . . . to throw the present into perspective. We can endure the current economic

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16. Allan Nevins, The Gateway to History, pp. 13-14.

boom or depression better if we comprehend what preceded and followed 1837 and 1873. We can take a clearer view of Mussolini if we are familiar with the career of Napoleon III. It throws the course of the Japanese in China into better definition to know something of the time when the savage horsemen of Tamerlane rode across the roof of the world.<sup>17</sup>

It is conceivable that those who advocate the use of history content in the schools only as background information in current problems courses might agree with Nevins' arguments for the study of history presented thus far that knowledge of history content is necessary to a full understanding of the present scene and to gaining perspective. However, the writer sees no likelihood of their agreeing with him that the planned study in ample and detailed works of considerable periods of history is necessary if knowledge of the subject is to contribute to the cultivation of wisdom, of mature judgment, and of a tolerant spirit through the discernment of streams of tendency in the story of men and through gaining a broad view of the development of nations:

It is often said that reading history enlarges the mind and makes the spirit broader and more tolerant. But why and how? This end cannot be achieved by dipping here and there, but only by the planned study of considerable periods in the life of populous and important nations.

Only by such study, to begin with, are streams of tendency, economic, social, and cultural, to be discerned in history. These can be defined in brief textbooks, but they can be illustrated only by rich and ample narratives. As an example, we can take Motley's Rise of the Dutch Republic and United Netherlands; works which, with some superficialities and many inadequacies and inaccuracies, nevertheless furnish an impressive and instructive panorama. . . .

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17. Ibid., p. 14.

The reader of these volumes gains more than information. He obtains a broad new view of a great critical period of European history a deeper insight into some of the central tendencies of Occidental civilization. He rises from the work with judgment a little more matured, with wisdom a little riper.<sup>18</sup>

According to Nevins' contention, a planned and detailed study of history--of the United States, for example--makes it possible for the reader to discern for himself such broad tendencies as this country's growth in reliance on collective security arrangements in international relations, the government's increased role in the nation's business operations, and the trend toward welfare functions by government that has come with heavy urbanization. Sustained study of United States history also gives a broad view of the development of this country from a collection of weak, disunited states on the Atlantic seaboard to a wealthy and influential world power, Nevins' argument suggests. And this broad view plus awareness of central tendencies contributes to the cultivation of wisdom, mature judgment, and tolerance.

Nevins' use of Motley's Rise of the Dutch Republic and United Netherlands as an illustration of a detailed history that can reveal central tendencies and provide a broad view could prompt some to charge that a detailed study of the history of the Netherlands hardly seems necessary for high school students. His argument is not, however, that high school students should study the history of the Dutch Republic in detail. His claim is, rather, that sustained and detailed study of

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18. Ibid., p. 372.

the history of some important countries is necessary if history, through discernment of tendencies and through gaining a broad view, is to foster the growth of wisdom, judgment, and tolerance. And the writer assumes Nevins would apply this claim to whatever history might be the subject of study in the schools.

The case for studying the subject of history without relation to current problems courses is further supported by Nevins in his contention that a thorough examination of a considerable period in the life of a considerable civilization is necessary if history content is to bring a broad view of the conditions, limitations and potentialities of leadership.<sup>19</sup> Developing this idea that a thorough study of long periods of history gives a broad view of the role of leadership, he asserts that in the political sphere the "history of mankind is strewn with instances in which true statesmanship has produced prosperity and happiness, while the lack of it has brought about the most terrible calamities" and as examples of lack of astute leadership contributing to calamities he cites the failure of British statesmanship at the time of the American Revolution and the failure of Southern statesmanship at the time of the Civil War.<sup>20</sup>

Nevins' argument implies that in order for students to gain knowledge of the numerous instances in which effective leadership or lack of it has played a significant role in the affairs of men, they need

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19. Ibid., p. 375.

20. Ibid., p. 375.



to study events of a considerable period of time in the life of considerable civilizations.

A further argument advanced and illustrated by Nevins in behalf of the study of the subject of history is that such study is the only way in which students may understand how institutions evolve and how the nature of these institutions depends upon national tradition as well as upon physical and economic setting:

Still another utility of the sustained reading of history--of following a nation through many mutations and over a considerable period of time--is that this alone exhibits the rise, development, and decay of institutions; and what is more important, shows how much institutions depend upon national tradition, character, and habit, as well as upon physical and economic circumstances. Men untrained in history are wont to take contrasted views of institutions. They suppose that because universal suffrage works well in Australia, it would be a great blessing in Egypt. . . . They believe that the American Constitution is a model of perfection, and that if it were introduced into other lands (perhaps with free schools and free speech thrown in), order, liberty, and prosperity would result; though they need only look at Cuba and some of the South American republics to see that this is not so.<sup>21</sup>

One further plea for the study of history as a separate, logically organized subject is made by Nevins. In this instance he defends the study of American history. He deplores the tendency of what he calls extremists to ignore or misuse American history textbooks by reputable authors and to teach a compound of social studies and current affairs under the banner of American history. Admitting that viewing the various social studies as interrelated is illuminating and stimulating and

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21. Ibid., pp. 377-78.

that the modern tendency to emphasize interpretation and ideas is desirable, he nevertheless insists that a basic structure of historical fact taught with due attention to chronology, to great personalities, and to political forces and events must be kept intact.<sup>22</sup> His insistence is based on the claim that a knowledge of American history constitutes indispensable citizenship and moral training.<sup>23</sup>

In some of Nevins' writings relating to the issue of the comparative merits of maintaining history as a separate, organized discipline in the school curriculum or of merely using history content as background in current problems or social studies courses, then, he presents the argument that knowledge of history is essential to gaining understanding of the present and to acquiring the clear, calm view of the present which seeing the current scene in perspective only can bring. In his discussions which carry this claim, he does not indicate whether history content as background in current problems courses can promote understanding of the present and help students gain perspective effectively.

Other writings bearing on the issue under discussion either strongly imply or directly state the claim that history as a separate, organized subject should be maintained in the school curriculum on these grounds:

1. If history content is to promote the cultivation of wisdom,

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22. Allan Nevins, "Why We Should Know Our History," The New York Times Magazine (April 18, 1943), p. 25.

23. Supra, pp. 206-7.

of mature judgment, and of a tolerant spirit through the discernment of streams of tendency in man's story and through gaining a broad view of the development of nations, sustained study in detailed works of considerable periods is necessary;

2. a thorough examination of a considerable period in the life of a considerable civilization is essential if history content is to bring a broad view of the conditions, limitations, and potentialities of leadership;
  3. a sustained study of history is the only way in which students may understand how institutions evolve and how the nature of these institutions depends upon national tradition as well as upon physical and economic setting; and,
  4. the study of American history, with a basic structure of historical fact taught with due attention to great personalities and to political forces and events, constitutes indispensable citizenship and moral training.
5. Are controversial issues best understood by pursuing a chronological study of history which reveals their past forms clearly and to some extent outlines their present forms; or are they best understood by a direct consideration of the current aspects of the issues with historical background brought in only when it is clearly necessary for understanding?

One of Nevins' arguments discussed in the previous section was that a sustained study of history may bring about both the discernment of streams of tendency and a broad view of the development of nations and thus promote the cultivation of a tolerant spirit. Since it is

generally agreed that a tolerant spirit is essential to dealing calmly with controversial issues, the argument seems to the writer to suggest that its author sees unique possibilities in the study of the subject of history for enabling students to handle present controversies dispassionately.

At another point in his writing Nevins seems to imply that the study of the subject of history furnishes a broad view of past events which enables the student to make a calm appraisal of controversial issues:

Such [sustained] reading [of history] helps men a little to measure time against eternity; to rise above the heat and dust of ephemeral issues into a serener atmosphere. Who wins the next election may seem a matter of desperate concern; who wins the war of really overwhelming importance. But the first may be trivial in its bearing upon national destiny, and the second of no lasting significance in its bearing on human destiny. In moments of party triumph or national exaltation, history teaches a wise humility; in ~~moments~~ of darkness, confusion, or pain it teaches a wise patience.<sup>24</sup>

If the writer's interpretation of Nevins' position on this issue is granted, it may be said his writing suggests that the study of the subject of history, by making possible the discernment of tendencies and a broad view of events, promotes the tolerance of spirit and the calm temper which allow the student to deal with present controversial issues dispassionately.

This position does not deny that a direct consideration of current aspects of controversial issues may have some merit. It does seem to

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24. Allan Nevins, The Gateway to History, pp. 378-9.

reject the idea that such consideration, by itself, may enable students to deal with controversial matters calmly and dispassionately.

6. Is history most effectively learned by starting with a detailed study of a limited period or area or by beginning with a general survey of a broad area or time span?

As was demonstrated by the discussion of Nevins' views on the question of retaining the subject of history in the school curriculum, he takes the position that both breadth and depth in the study of history are essential if the subject is to yield such results as ability to view the present scene with composure; a tolerant spirit; or an understanding of tendencies, the role of leadership in the affairs of men, and the evolution of institutions.

As was indicated earlier in another connection, Nevins takes the view that only by the planned study of considerable periods in the life of populous nations may streams of tendency--economic, social, and cultural--be discerned in history. He points out that these can be defined in brief textbooks, but that they can be illustrated only by rich and ample narratives.<sup>25</sup> And as examples of rich and ample narratives, he cites Motley's Rise and Fall of the Dutch Republic and United Netherlands, as was indicated earlier, Mommsen's Rome, Gibbons's Decline and Fall, and Michelet's History of France. Describing Motley's works, he asserts that the titles are somewhat unfortunate. They have led many people, he reports, to think of these works as essentially

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25. Supra, pp. 209-10.

Dutch history, whereas Motley deals with Spain, France, and England almost as fully as with Holland. In effect, it is further reported, he [Motley] offers us a history of all Western Europe during a crucial period--a history of the later phases of the Reformation, of the triumph of religious freedom in various lands over clerical absolutism, and of the emergence of Europe from the Middle Ages into the full light of modern times.<sup>26</sup>

Nevins says, then, in effect, that the detailed study of considerable periods in the life of considerable civilizations is the only method by which a clear understanding of history is possible.

On the basis of the position outlined above, it is assumed that he very likely would have the beginning student in the school start his study of history with a "rich and ample narrative." And in view of his stand on offering American history prior to the last two years in high school, it seems reasonable to suppose that he might well advocate starting the study of history with our own "considerable civilization."

7. Should young students become familiar with the content of history through casual and unorganized experiences with it before attempting a systematic study of history?

The method of this study yielded no comment by Nevins on this issue.

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26. Allan Nevins, The Gateway to History, p. 372.

8. Should the history teacher or the writer of history textbooks rigorously confine himself to material he has found to be true, or should he sometimes depart from this principle for the purpose of strengthening the loyalty of people to their country or of unifying them?

Nevins takes the position that history by its very definition is factual and unbiased. He contends, also, that awareness of a common tradition may have a unifying effect on the people of a nation. So far as his own nation is concerned, he does not seem to think there is any incompatibility between the factual presentation of history content and offering history for the purpose of promoting unity. However, he suggests that it is possible to produce textbooks which are free of nationalistic bias only in those countries which are already unified. Presumably he would not consider biased textbooks to be covered by his definition of history as a careful inquiry seeking the whole truth.

Nevins, along with the other reputable members of his craft, views history as an accounting of past events which embodies an honest attempt to report the whole truth:

History is any integrated narrative or description of past events or facts written in a spirit of critical inquiry for the whole truth. . . . Above all, it is the historical point of view, the historical method of approach--that is, the spirit of critical inquiry for the whole truth--which, applied to the past, makes history.<sup>27</sup>

This definition suggests to the writer that any distortion of history content for the purpose of promoting unity, by teachers or textbook writers would, in Nevins' view, constitute a violation of

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27. Ibid., pp. 22-3.

the most vital process in the field of history, that of critical inquiry for the whole truth. Thus, he would not likely accept such distortion as history worthy of a reputable member of the craft.

As for the role of history instruction in promoting national unity, Nevins seems to be convinced of the unequalled unifying force of the establishment of common tradition through narration of past events. He points out and illustrates that members of a nation are knit together above all else by learning of their common past:

The strongest element in the creation of any human organization of complex character and enduring strength is the establishment of common tradition by the narration of its history. . . . Members of a nation are knit together above all else by a common history--by learning of their past. The Greek who thrilled over Thermopylae, the Roman exulting in the tale of Caesar's conquests and triumphs, the Briton reading of the assault on Badajoz, the American following the epic story of Western pioneering, all have responded to the same emotion. . . . The school text that told the story of Valley Forge, the rhetorical page of Bancroft, helped immeasurably to make America a nation. Today Communist Russia is being welded together by a Communist version of history, the Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany by Fascist and Nazi histories. "Laws die, books never"--and the nation-builder may well say that he cares not who writes the laws of a country if he can write its history.<sup>28</sup>

From Nevins' references to "versions" of history like those of the Nazi Germans and Soviet Communists which serve to weld their people together and from his statement that the nation builder may well be more interested in writing a country's history than its laws, the writer infers an implicit acknowledgment by this historian that history content when used mainly to promote unity may not meet the requirements

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28. Ibid., p. 4.



set down in his definition of history. And if this inference is accepted, why does Nevins refer to books that do not meet these requirements as history? The writer can only guess that for convenience he designates as history the writings of those who are neither reputable scholars nor governed by the spirit of inquiry but who nevertheless write books about the past which they call "histories".

Both Nevins' concern that national unity be promoted and his belief that historical content must play a vital role in establishing that unity were demonstrated in an earlier section of this chapter in his presentation of the case for requiring history in the schools. His argument is that a thorough, accurate, and intelligent knowledge of our national past is the best ground for faith in the present and hope for the future. And, he points out that the failure to require American history of students in many parts of the country and thus the failure to tap the American history fountain of inspiration for these students constitutes a subject for inquiry, reproach, and action.<sup>29</sup> This argument points clearly to a conviction on Nevins' part that the use of accurate history content in the instruction of the nation's students may well promote unity or patriotism.

Writing during the Second World War and endorsing an argument of eastern college administrators and students in behalf of more adequate instruction in the American tradition, he further supports the idea

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29. Supra, p. 204.

that knowledge of history has a unifying effect, asserting that an understanding of the development of this country is necessary to national unity:

. . . . National identity and national ideals are both rooted in history. We cannot feel that we are all Americans together unless we know how the United States came to be and grow; we cannot understand what we are fighting for unless we know how our principles developed.<sup>30</sup>

Knowing how the United States came to be and grow and knowing how this nation's principles developed may reasonably be interpreted to mean having accurate knowledge of the development of this country and its commonly accepted ideals. If this interpretation is accepted, then Nevins may be said, on the basis of the above statement, to take the view that unity or enlightened patriotism in this country depends upon accurate knowledge of history.

In 1947, in an article which concerned the problems of revising history textbooks throughout the world and which upheld the idea of revision, Nevins seems to take the position that textbooks which are governed by the strict requirements of historical scholarship are a possibility only after national unity has been established, and he implies that national unity is so important that teaching a nation's youth the whole truth about their country's past is of necessity secondary to it:

To talk of the elimination of "nationalistic bias" is actually to oversimplify the problem. The roots of distortion

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30. Allan Nevins, "American History for Americans," The New York Times Magazine (May 3, 1942), p. 18.

must be attacked, and they run deep. Why for three generations did American texts contain indefensible misstatements and misinterpretations regarding the Revolution? Because youthful America, full of sectional and State attachments, needed to be given a strong national feeling. American heroism contrasted with Hessian, British and Tory-American villainy supplied it. As the country grew up a change became possible. . . .

Textbook revision has been easiest in those countries which are mature and well-unified, and hence need no artificial stimulants to patriotism. It has been easiest in successful nations, with few defeats to give rise to wounded self-esteem, and no inferiority complex to gratify. It has been easiest in lands without festering boundary quarrels and irritable neighbors. In a word, it has been easiest in Britain, Scandinavia and the United States, countries whose texts are now probably freer from bias than any others.<sup>31</sup>

This argument seems to the writer to be an acknowledgment by Nevins either that the historical scholarship discussed above (which may fail to glorify the nation) has no place in a country which is not unified or that in such a country textbook writers and history teachers may disregard any findings of the historians which they think may have a disunifying effect. Thus, his stand that accurate knowledge of a nation's past promotes national unity seems to be inapplicable to countries not yet unified.

The following points summarize what the writer takes to be Nevins' stand on this issue:

- 1) history, by definition, is unbiased, representing a critical inquiry which seeks to discover the whole truth about the past;

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31. Allan Nevins, "To Take the Poison Out of Textbooks" The New York Times Magazine (February 23, 1947), p. 64.

- 2) the establishment of a common tradition through the narration of past events unifies the members of a nation above all else;
- 3) accurate, unbiased history content may be used to promote unity among the youth of a nation if that nation is already well stabilized and unified; but,
- 4) history textbooks and instruction which are governed by the strict requirements of historical scholarship are a possibility only in countries in which national unity has been established.

9. Should history be studied for its own sake as well as for the purpose of throwing light on the current scene?

Examination of Nevins' writings yielded no single instance in which he claimed that history should be studied for its own sake. His arguments, presented earlier in the chapter, in favor of the study of history, it will be recalled, emphasized the ways in which knowledge of history enables its student to handle the current scene effectively through understanding present problems and institutions, attaining perspective, and gaining the inspiration that results in love of country. However, he does indicate sympathy for the idea of studying history for its own sake. In The Gateway to History, writing of reasons for reading history, he includes that of being instructed about the past: "History may be read for entertainment. It may be read for instruction about the past, and (though as Coleridge said, most of it is like the sternlights of a ship, illuminating only the course that is past) for guidance to the future."<sup>32</sup>

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32. Allan Nevins, The Gateway to History, p. 364.

Making a plea for a popular history magazine at another point in his writings, he reveals the view that an examination of the past without any special regard for the present may absorb the interest of readers. But even as he presents this view, he couples it with a reference to the value of the study of history for purposes of throwing light on the present. ". . . . A distinct place exists for a popular historical magazine. It would do much to educate Americans in the dignity and fascination of their own past, and in the historical backgrounds of many a world problem of today."<sup>33</sup>

Although Nevins has said, then, in effect, that reading history for its own sake may prove interesting and absorbing, he does not emphasize the idea of history for the sake of the past but rather the role of history in throwing light on the present as he outlines the educative functions of the study of history.

10. Should the preparation of teachers in the field of history consist principally of pedagogical training or of instruction in the subject field to be taught?

In none of his writings examined by the writer does Nevins refer directly to the matter of what the emphasis should be in the training of history teachers. In view of his stand that American history should be required in the secondary schools and that courses in world history are important in general citizenship training, it seems likely to the writer that he would make the study of history a significant part of

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33. Allan Nevins, "What's the Matter with History?" Saturday Review of Literature, Volume 19 (February 4, 1939), p. 16.

the training of history teachers. This is not to say he would neglect pedagogical training. But this study yielded no information from Nevins' work which allows even a guess about how much pedagogical training for history teachers he would recommend.

11. Should the nature of the history curriculum in the schools be decided by specialists in the field of education, or should such decisions be made primarily by historians?

Nevins does not take the position that either professional educators or historians ought to decide upon the nature of the history curriculum in the schools. Rather he holds that curriculum is a matter for the efforts of both groups. The emphasis in his arguments, as might be expected of a historian, is on the role of the historian in curriculum building. However, he indicates that the activities of the "educational extremists" who would teach a combination of social studies under the label of history demand the vigilance of competent educators and historians alike.

Writing in 1943 in defense of the study of American history, he quotes a description written by Rolla Tryon in 1917, which contrasts the curricular position of the historians who want a logical, detailed, systematic, and chronological approach to history with that of the "educational extremists" who see use for history content only as it relates to some aspect of the present scene which is being studied.

Historians believe in the chronological method of approach and the logical development of the subject; while the educational psychologists, sociologists, and administrators care little about chronological approach and logical development. The historians insist that we must have a whole story; that the

history of the United States must begin at the beginning and the story must be told logically from 1492 right down to the present time. On the other hand, the educational psychologists, sociologists, and administrators have little interest in this complete story. They say begin at the present, if you like, or in the middle, and go in any direction you choose. The historians also believe there must be a rather detailed view of an epoch; the other folks say that a general view in most cases is sufficient. And finally the historians claim that one cannot understand the present until one knows and understands the past. The educators tell us that the important thing is to know the present and that if the past will help, well and good, but we should start with the present and then if there is anything in the past that we can need we can go back and bring it into view.<sup>34</sup>

In endorsing the historians' position as outlined in the Tryon statement and in asserting that history as a separate discipline must be kept intact in the curriculum, Nevins makes an implicit claim, the writer believes, that historians have a stake in determining the history curriculum:

Dr. Tryon's statement indicated that even in 1917 the time had come when a stand had to be made against the educational extremists who, in the name of pedagogic reform, were throwing the American history baby out with the bath. That stand has never been sufficiently determined. Most teachers' colleges and their graduates seem to deal honestly with history; but a radical minority has grown increasingly bold in defacing and diluting it. . . . A basic structure of historical fact, taught with due attention to chronology to great personalities, and to political forces and events, must be kept intact.<sup>35</sup>

In the sense that the subject matter selection and organization of the textbooks they use are adopted by a large proportion of teachers,

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34. Allan Nevins, "Why We Should Know Our History," The New York Times Magazine (April 18, 1943), p. 16.

35. Ibid., pp. 16 and 25.

textbook writers become builders of curriculum. Thus, another indication that Nevins feels historians are qualified to be curriculum makers is his reference to the excellent school textbooks in American history written by eminent historians and his complaint that such texts may be disregarded or misused by extremists bent upon turning history into a course of combined social studies:

For teaching American history as a separate, logically developed and integral subject, adequate texts exist in abundance. The best historical scholars of America, ever since McMaster and Channing, have taken time to provide good books. Admirably written and illustrated volumes, provided for a wide though unfortunately not all-comprehensive market, have been written by Professors Muzzey, Martin, Commager, Faulkner, Gabriel, Schlesinger, Michels, and many more. But such texts may be ignored or misused by extremists who use special syllabi, and whose aim is to teach a compound of civics, economics, sociology, psychology, and current affairs under a misleading rubric.<sup>36</sup>

His belief that both educators and historians ought to have a part in making the history curriculum is set forth directly by Nevins as he proposes a method of combatting the influence of the extremists:

To remedy the neglect of this great study [American history], to protect it from corroding fads; and to fit it to the changing conditions of education requires an earnest effort by qualified educators and historians.<sup>37</sup>

In summary, Nevins' position on the question of what group should make the history curriculum is this: In order to protect history as a separate, logically developed and integral subject from the extremists who would make use of history content as it fitted into general

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36. Ibid., p. 25.

37. Ibid., p. 25.



social studies courses, a serious effort by both qualified historians and educators is required. Thus, he does not reserve the curriculum-making function for either the educators or the historians but apparently for those members of both groups who would keep the subject of history intact.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CONCLUSIONS

The drawing of conclusions which seem to be warranted by the findings in this study is divided into two operations. The first and more important encompasses a summary of the positions of the five historians on all the issues and a consequent judgment concerning the question: Do historians have a unified point of view on widely debated issues bearing on the teaching of history? The second involves a comparison of the views of the five historians with those set forth in the resolutions submitted to the Council of the American Historical Association in 1952 by Bestor and a substantial number of eminent fellow craftsmen.<sup>1</sup> This operation focuses on the question: Insofar as historians may be said to have a common point of view, do those who purport to speak for the whole group correctly represent it?

Each of the following statements of findings and conclusions is preceded by a brief explanation of the system used for reporting.

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1. The resolutions are singled out for no other reason than that they summarize the views of the most outspoken of the schools' critics among the historians, Bestor, and that they are sponsored by a large group of prominent historians.

### Conclusions Warranted by the Findings in this Study

#### Method

It was indicated in the section introducing the five independent essays that, for purposes of reporting conclusions, a re-formulation of the issues used as a common framework for those chapters would be necessary. In carrying out this job, formulations were sought which dealt with the same areas of controversy as those used in the five chapters but which would allow the writer to draw conclusions as precisely as possible. The process was to frame a question in each area of dispute so phrased that a maximum number of clearly positive or negative answers and a minimum number of indeterminate responses could be drawn from the positions reported in the five essays. To illustrate this process of reformulation, Issue Number Four in the several essays reads, "Should history be maintained in the school curriculum as an organized discipline, or should its content merely be employed in contributing to the understanding of social problems being studied under some other curricular arrangement?" To facilitate reporting conclusions, the following question from the same area of dispute was selected: "Should history necessarily be maintained in the curriculum as a separate subject?" The latter formulation permits reporting yes and no answers as the former obviously does not. It also allows the writer, on comparing the words of all five, to place the views of the largest possible number of men into positive and negative categories and a minimum into a neutral classification.

The following issue, as phrased for purposes of reporting, requires special explanation: "Should the history teacher or writer of history textbooks under all circumstances give paramount consideration to the conveying of a correct impression of what, as he sees it, has actually occurred?" The phrasing is not meant to suggest that wishing to emphasize other considerations, such as making presentations colorful and interesting or as pointing up the moral choices implicit in a given historical event, should be interpreted as calling for a negative answer to this question. After all, one is sometimes faced with the necessity of presenting something less than the full story if anything is to be conveyed at all. The criterion implied in this issue is not violated by the historiographer who omits detail in the interests of simplification, coherence, or clarity. Rather, the issue bears on the question of whether the teacher or textbook writer is ever justified in promoting certain attitudes deemed desirable in direct contradiction to conveying a correct impression of what has actually occurred. In other words, the question at issue is whether an attitude considered desirable, such as national loyalty, ever should be promoted by purposely withholding facts, by unduly emphasizing selected data or by deliberate falsification.

The writer found the views of the five historians to be roughly classifiable into these several groups when checked against a particular issue:

- 1) those that fall on the affirmative side of the question on the basis of direct comment by the author, of implications within

his position, or of acceptance of a point of view expounded with a co-author;

- 2) those that fall on the negative side of the question on the basis of direct comment by the author, of implications within his position, or of acceptance of a point of view expounded with a co-author;
- 3) those that are characterized by conflicting statements or implications which put their author on first one and then the other side of the issue;
- 4) those that are characterized by statements or implications which, although not contradictory, do not warrant placing their author clearly on one side or the other of the issue as formulated; and,
- 5) those yielding no comment on the issue.

These classifications lend themselves to a tabular method of reporting on each issue which might be set up as follows:

- 1) views falling into classification one above would be reported opposite the names of their authors and under the heading yes;
- 2) views falling into classification two would be reported opposite their authors' names and under the heading no;
- 3) views falling into classifications three and four would be reported opposite the names of the appropriate authors and under the heading neutral or ambiguous;

- 4) views falling into classification five would be reported opposite the names of the appropriate authors and under the heading noncommittal.

The writer feels constrained to point out that although most of the historians' views on most of the issues fall clearly under one or another of these headings, a few of the views on a few of the issues lie in the twilight zone between neutral or ambiguous and yes or between neutral or ambiguous and no which makes confident judgments impossible. In each of these few cases, after careful appraisal and re-appraisal of the statement of position in question, a judgment has been made in favor of the heading which has finally and most persistently seemed to the writer to fit most closely the view as stated. None of these uncertain judgments is one which, if changed, would make the difference between a report of disagreement and one of agreement on the issue in question.

Once the views of the several men had been summarized in the rough tabular form already described, judgments concerning unanimity of view or lack of it were made according to this pattern:

- 1) if all the historians' views fall under either the heading yes or the heading no, the views on that issue are adjudged in agreement;
- 2) if one or more of the historians' views fall under the category yes while one or more of the views fall under the category no, the views on that issue are adjudged in disagreement;

- 3) if one or more of the historians' views fall under the category yes while one or more are classified neutral or ambiguous or non-committal, the data are regarded as inadequate for a judgment concerning agreement on that issue; and, in exactly the same way;
- 4) if one or more of the historians' views fall under the category no while one or more are classified neutral or ambiguous or non-committal, the data are considered inadequate for a judgment concerning agreement.

The special classification noncommittal, it will be noted, serves no function different from that served by the category neutral or ambiguous in the method for judging views in agreement or in disagreement. This heading, however, does point up clearly the extent of consideration given the several issues by the historians and seems to the writer justifiable on the ground of fidelity to the raw data.

#### 1. Conclusions Bearing on the Extent of Agreement on the Issues among the Five Historians.

This study has examined the views of all five historians on eleven issues bearing on the teaching of history. On two of these issues, the historians are judged in agreement; on five they are judged in disagreement; and on four the data are not sufficient to warrant a judgment.

Issues on which the historians are agreed:

1. Should American youth study world or European history as well as American history?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Neutral or Ambiguous</u>	<u>Noncommittal</u>
Hart	X			
Becker	X			
Beard	X			
Schlesinger	X			
Nevins	X			

2. Should the nature of the history curriculum in the schools be decided entirely by specialists in the field of education?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Neutral or Ambiguous</u>	<u>Noncommittal</u>
Hart		X		
Becker		X		
Beard		X		
Schlesinger		X		
Nevins		X		

Issues on which the historians disagree:

1. Should a fairly extensive study of history be strongly urged for all students in the nation's schools?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Neutral or Ambiguous</u>	<u>Noncommittal</u>
Hart	X			
Becker		X		
Beard		X		
Schlesinger			X	
Nevins	X			

2. Should history necessarily be maintained in the curriculum as a separate subject?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Neutral or Ambiguous</u>	<u>Noncommittal</u>
Hart	X			
Becker		X		
Beard	X			
Schlesinger			X	
Nevins	X			



3. Should young students' first experience with history content take the form of a systematic study of the subject?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Neutral or Ambiguous</u>	<u>Noncommittal</u>
Hart		X		
Becker				X
Beard	X			
Schlesinger				X
Nevins				X

4. Should the history teacher or writer of history textbooks under all circumstances give paramount consideration to the conveying of a correct impression of what, as he sees it, has actually occurred?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Neutral or Ambiguous</u>	<u>Noncommittal</u>
Hart			X	
Becker	X			
Beard			X	
Schlesinger	X			
Nevins		X		

5. Is the study of history for its own sake justifiable?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Neutral or Ambiguous</u>	<u>Noncommittal</u>
Hart	X			
Becker			X	
Beard		X		
Schlesinger	X			
Nevins			X	

It is interesting to note that agreement among the historians tends to be on very broad issues involving only the most general of decisions concerning curriculum. For example, they agree that students should learn world or European as well as American history. On the other hand, the issues on which the historians disagree usually involve

more specific choices, such as whether to make beginning history a systematic study and whether the history teacher should always select material for presentation which will convey a correct impression of what actually happened.

Issues on which the historians' views permit no judgment concerning agreement:

1. Should history be required in the schools?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Neutral or Ambiguous</u>	<u>Noncommittal</u>
Hart	X			
Becker			X	
Beard				X
Schlesinger				X
Nevins	X			

2. Are controversial issues best understood by pursuing a  
Chronological study of history?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Neutral or Ambiguous</u>	<u>Noncommittal</u>
Hart	X			
Becker				X
Beard	X			
Schlesinger				X
Nevins	X			

3. Is history most effectively learned by starting with a  
detailed study rather than a general survey?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Neutral or Ambiguous</u>	<u>Noncommittal</u>
Hart	X			
Becker	X			
Beard				X
Schlesinger				X
Nevins	X			

4. Should the preparation of history teachers emphasize training in the subject to be taught over instruction in teaching methods?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Neutral or Ambiguous</u>	<u>Noncommittal</u>
Hart	X			
Becker	X			
Beard			X	
Schlesinger				X
Nevins				X

SUMMARY OF AGREEMENT AND DISAGREEMENT AMONG THE FIVE HISTORIANS' VIEWS  
ON THE TEACHING OF HISTORY

	Hart Becker Beard Schlesinger Nevins Summary					
1. Should American youth study world or European history as well as American history?	Yes	X	X	X	X	Agreement
	No					
	Neut.					
	or					
	Amb.					
2. Should the nature of the history curriculum in the schools be decided entirely by specialists in the field of education?	Non-Com.					
	Yes					
	No	X	X	X	X	Agreement
	Neut.					
	or					
3. Should a fairly extensive study of history be strongly urged for all students in the nation's schools?	Amb.					
	Non-Com.					
	Yes	X			X	Dis-agreement
	No		X	X		
	Neut.					
4. Should history necessarily be maintained in the curriculum as a separate subject?	or				X	
	Amb.					
	Non-Com.					
	Yes	X		X	X	Dis-agreement
	No		X			
5. Should young students' first experience with history content take the form of a systematic study of the subject?	Neut.					
	or				X	
	Amb.					
	Non-Com.					
	Yes			X		Dis-agreement
	No	X				
	Neut.					
	or					
	Amb.					
	Non-Com.		X		X	X

	Hart Becker Beard Schlesinger Nevins Summary			
6. Should the history teacher or writer of history textbooks under all circumstances give paramount consideration to the conveying of a correct impression of what, as he sees it, has actually occurred?	Yes	X	X	Dis-agreement
	No			X
	Neut.			
	or	X	X	
	Amb.			
7. Is the study of history for its own sake justifiable?	Yes	X	X	Dis-agreement
	No		X	
	Neut.			
	or	X		X
	Amb.			
8. Should history be required in the schools?	Yes	X		No Judgment
	No			
	Neut.			
	or	X		
	Amb.			
9. Are controversial issues best understood by pursuing a chronological study of history?	Yes	X	X	No Judgment
	No			
	Neut.			
	or			
	Amb.			
10. Is history most effectively learned by starting with a detailed study rather than a general survey?	Yes	X	X	No Judgment
	No			
	Neut.			
	or			
	Amb.			
	Non-Com.		X	X
	Yes	X	X	X
	No			
	Neut.			
	or			
	Amb.			
	Non-Com.		X	X

	Hart	Becker	Beard	Schlesinger	Nevins	Summary
11. Should the preparation of history teachers emphasize training in the subject to be taught over instruction in teaching methods?	Yes	X	X			No Judgment
	No					
	Neut.					
	or			X		
	Amb.					
	Non-					
	Com.				X	X

These data clearly show that there is not a unified point of view among historians on widely debated issues bearing on the teaching of history.

### Method

To compare the positions taken on issues in the teaching of history by Bestor and his colleagues in the resolution and the views held by the five "subject" historians, only a slight variation of the method for reporting the preceding conclusions has been necessary. The writer has elected to use the same general process for determining views on the issues and the same categories for reporting the "spokesmen" group's viewpoints as those employed for presenting the stands of the five historians. Decisions concerning agreement between the former and the latter have been made on the same bases as those employed in making judgments as to whether the subject historians agree with each other on the various issues. In reporting the second group of conclusions, the procedure varies from the earlier one to the extent that the position expressed in the resolutions on each issue is set down along with the stands of the five and that the emphasis is placed on comparing the spokesmen's view with the aggregate of the historians'. In addition, the views expressed independently by each of the two subject historians who also sponsored the resolutions, Schlesinger and Nevins, are compared with those encompassed in the resolutions.

## 2. Conclusions Bearing on the Extent of Agreement on the Issues between the Five "Subject" Historians and the Selected "Spokesmen" Group.

The five subject historians and the spokesmen historians have expressed views on five issues in common. The two groups are in complete agreement with each other on only one of these issues. On three of the issues, at least one of the subject historians disagrees with the spokesmen. Two of the subject historians agree with the spokesmen on the remaining issue, while the other three are neutral or ambiguous or noncommittal. On this last issue, in the absence of data actually pointing to disagreement and in all possible fairness to Bestor and those sponsoring the resolutions, the writer has judged probable agreement.

1. Should the nature of the history curriculum in the schools be decided entirely by specialists in the field of education?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Neutral or Ambiguous</u>	<u>Noncommittal</u>
Hart		X		
Becker		X		
Beard		X		
Schlesinger		X		
Nevins		X		

(Complete agreement)

2. Should a fairly extensive study of history be strongly urged for all students in the nation's schools?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Neutral or Ambiguous</u>	<u>Noncommittal</u>
Spokesmen	X			
Hart	X			
Becker		X		
Beard		X		
Schlesinger			X	
Nevins	X			



Two agree with spokesmen  
 One disagrees  
 One is in the neutral or ambiguous category.  
 (Disagreement)

3. Should history necessarily be maintained in the curriculum as a separate subject?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Neutral or Ambiguous</u>	<u>Noncommittal</u>
Spokesmen	X			
Hart	X			
Becker		X		
Beard	X			
Schlesinger			X	
Nevins	X			

Three agree with spokesmen  
 One disagrees  
 One is in the neutral or ambiguous category.  
 (Disagreement)

4. Should the history teacher or writer of history textbooks under all circumstances give paramount consideration to the conveying of a correct impression of what, as he sees it, has actually occurred?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Neutral or Ambiguous</u>	<u>Noncommittal</u>
Spokesmen	X			
Hart			X	
Becker	X			
Beard			X	
Schlesinger	X			
Nevins		X		

Two agree with spokesmen  
 One disagrees  
 Two are in the neutral or ambiguous category.  
 (Disagreement)

5. Should the preparation of history teachers emphasize training in the subject to be taught over instruction in teaching methods?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Neutral or Ambiguous</u>	<u>Noncommittal</u>
Spokesmen	X			
Hart	X			
Becker	X			
Beard			X	
Schlesinger				X
Nevins				X

Two agree with spokesmen

One is in the neutral or ambiguous category

Two are noncommittal

(Probable agreement)

**SUMMARY OF AGREEMENT AND DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN THE SUBJECT HISTORIANS  
AND THE SPOKESMEN HISTORIANS**

	Spokesman Hart Becker Beard Schlesinger Nevins						
1. Should the nature of the history curriculum in the schools be decided entirely by specialists in the field of education?	Yes						*
	No	X	X	X	X	X	1
	Neut.						
	or						
	Amb.						
2. Should a fairly extensive study of history be strongly urged for all students in the nation's schools?	Non-Com.						
	Yes	X	X			X	2
	No			X	X		
	Neut.						
	or					X	
3. Should history necessarily be maintained in the curriculum as a separate subject?	Amb.						
	Non-Com.						
	Yes	X	X		X	X	2
	No			X			
	Neut.						
4. Should the history teacher or writer of history textbooks under all circumstances give paramount consideration to the conveying of a correct impression of what, as he sees it, has actually occurred?	or					X	
	Amb.						
	Non-Com.						
	Yes	X		X		X	2
	No						X
5. Should the preparation of history teachers emphasize training in the subjects to be taught over instruction in teaching methods?	Neut.						
	or						
	Amb.			X	X		
	Non-Com.						
	Yes	X	X	X			3
	No						
	Neut.				X		
	or						
	Amb.						
	Non-Com.					X	X

\* Key: 1, agreement; 2, disagreement; 3, probable agreement.

As these findings show clearly, any claim of the spokesmen that their views on the teaching of history are representative of the craft is not warranted.

Schlesinger's views as reflected in his own writing and those views embodied in the resolutions are in agreement on two of the five issues. On two others the position found in the resolution represents a positive stand and Schlesinger's view is neutral, and on one of the issues the spokesmen's position is positive while Schlesinger's is noncommittal:

	Issue Number	Yes	No	Neutral or Ambiguous	Noncommittal
Spokesmen	1		X		
	2	X			
	3	X			
	4	X			
	5	X			
Schlesinger	1		X		
	2			X	
	3			X	
	4	X			
	5				X
Agree	1		X		
	4	X			
Disagree					
Neither	2			X	
	3			X	
	5				X

Concerning the three issues on which in his own writing Schlesinger is neutral or noncommittal, one may guess that his failure to take a clear stand may be the result of a relative disinterest or an assumption

that the issue is minor or practically resolved. His failure to comment points up at most a difference in emphasis in his views on the teaching of history from that of the spokesmen group as a whole. On the face of the data furnished by his own writings and the resolutions, Schlesinger's own works are not in disagreement with the resolutions he endorses, and one can conclude fairly that his endorsement of the resolutions is a consistent action.

Nevins' views as presented in his own writings and those views embodied in the resolutions are in agreement on three of the five issues. The position found in the resolutions represents a positive stand on one of the issues, while Nevins is noncommittal in his own writings. On the remaining issue his stand is in disagreement with that of the group as a whole:

	Issue Number	Yes	No	Neutral or Ambiguous	Noncommittal
Spokesmen	1		X		
	2	X			
	3	X			
	4	X			
	5	X			
Nevins	1		X		
	2	X			
	3	X			
	4		X		
	5				X
Agree	1		X		
	2	X			
	3	X			
Disagree	4		X		
Neither	5				X

The disagreement on one of the issues between Nevins' own words and the position stated in the resolutions is the only fact that requires an explanation differing from that offered in the case of Schlesinger. These possible reasons for the apparent contradiction seem plausible to the writer:

- 1) Nevins agrees with most of the views expressed in the resolutions, although not all, and he has signed them despite some reservations.
- 2) He agrees with the sentiments expressed in the very general statements of the resolutions; but, as is often and understandably the case, he did not before signing take into consideration all of the possible implications of these statements, some of which he would not accept. Details of the disagreement seem to support this supposition. The issue involving the disagreement focuses on the question of whether those who instruct students in history should present only material they have found to be true. The resolutions touch upon this controversy in a very general way, pointing out that high standards of scholarship are necessary among those who teach history and that attempts by pressure groups to impose any kind of dogma on them should be resisted by history teachers. The writer found agreement with these general sentiments in Nevins' own works. Dealing with a somewhat more specific issue, however, he indicates that he would make an

exception to the rule of teaching the truth in a situation in which loyalty to country "needs" to be instilled among a people not yet unified.

In addition to the conclusions reported above, the writer believes that the following hypotheses suggested by the findings in this study deserve to be entertained:

Hypotheses Suggested by the Findings in this Study

1. In the face of the clearly demonstrated diversity of views on the teaching of history among historians, the data of this study suggest that there may be no such unanimity of position among professors of other liberal and scientific disciplines as is implied in some of the literature. Inquiries similar to this one in other arts and science fields would be necessary to warrant this conclusion.
2. Since the proposition that an independent commission of historians and other scholars would be an effective organization for solving school problems rests in great part on the assumption that there is a unified and distinctive point of view on school practices among these scholars which needs only to be translated into action, the findings in this study, which clearly refute this assumption, at least cast some doubt on the value of the proposal.

The preceding conclusions and hypotheses lead the writer to the following recommendations:

#### Recommendations

In view of the findings of the study, perhaps an approach different from the independent aloofness involved in setting up a scholarly commission might more profitably be emphasized by historians. This approach might well be built on the conviction that differences in point of view on school practices must be accepted and reconciled as school policy is made, no matter whether historians, or professional educators are taking action. An approach so rooted might take the form of willingness to join forces in the difficult and tedious job of hammering out school policy. Thus, progress might be made in concentrating the experience, ability, and efforts of an able and interested group--the historians--on solving pressing educational problems instead of on merely deploring or protesting present school practices.



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## APPENDIX A

Historians Whose Names Appeared on at Least  
Two of the Three Jurors' Lists

Henry Adams (1838-1918)  
 Herbert Baxter Adams (1850-1901)  
 Charles McLean Andrews (1863-1943)  
 George Bancroft (1800-1891)  
 John S. Bassett (1867-1928)  
 Charles A. Beard (1874-1948)  
 Carl Becker (1873-1945)  
 Edward Channing (1856-1931)  
 Sidney Fay (1876- )  
 John Fiske (1842-1901)  
 Dixon Ryan Fox (1887-1945)  
 Albert Bushnell Hart (1854-1943)  
 Carleton J. H. Hayes (1882- )  
 Richard Hildreth (1807-1865)  
 Andrew C. McLaughlin (1861-1947)  
 John Bach McMaster (1852-1932)  
 Allan Nevins (1890- )  
 E. P. Oberholtzer (1868-1936)  
 Herbert L. Osgood (1855-1918)  
 Francis Parkman (1823-1893)  
 Ulrich B. Phillips (1877-1934)  
 William Prescott (1796-1859)  
 James G. Randall (1881-1952)  
 James Ford Rhodes (1848-1927)  
 Arthur Schlesinger (1888- )  
 James Schouler (1839-1920)  
 R. G. Thwaites (1853-1913)  
 Frederick Jackson Turner (1861-1932)  
 C. H. VanTyne (1869-1930)  
 Thomas J. Wertenbaker (1879- )  
 Woodrow Wilson (1856-1924)  
 Justin Winsor (1831-1897)

## AUTOBIOGRAPHY

I, Katharine Garza Jones, was born in Denison, Texas, August 23, 1915. I received my secondary school education in the public schools of Denison, Texas. My undergraduate training was obtained at The Ohio State University, from which I received the degree Bachelor of Science in 1945. From the same institution, I received the degree Master of Arts in 1947. During the years from 1945 to 1947, I taught history and English in the public schools of Columbus, Ohio. From 1947 to 1953, I was an instructor in American history and in the core program at the University School of The Ohio State University. I taught English and social studies in East Lansing, Michigan during 1954 and 1955. In the summers of 1947, 1948, and 1951, I acted in the capacity of assistant to Professor Alan F. Griffin of The Ohio State University.